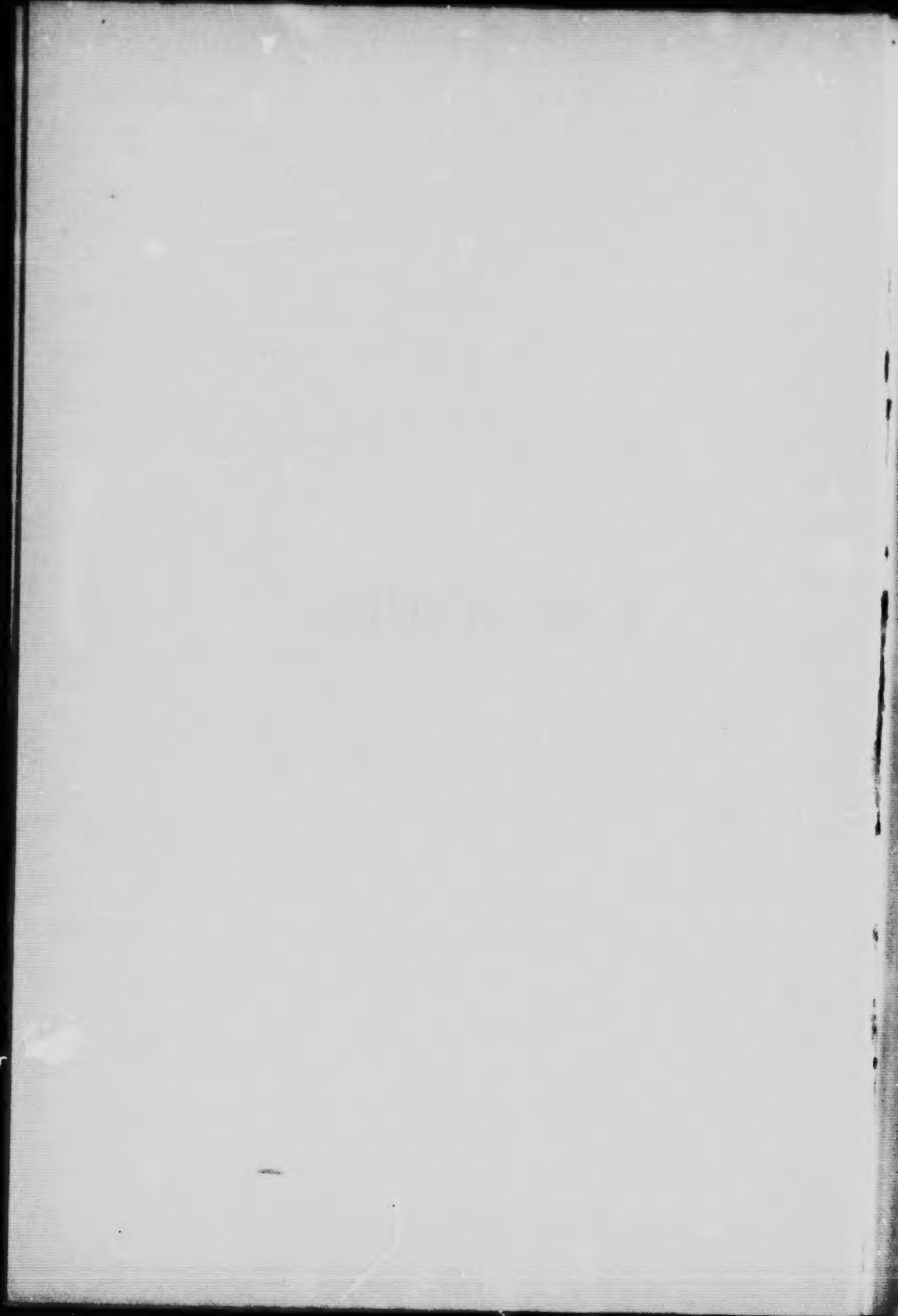


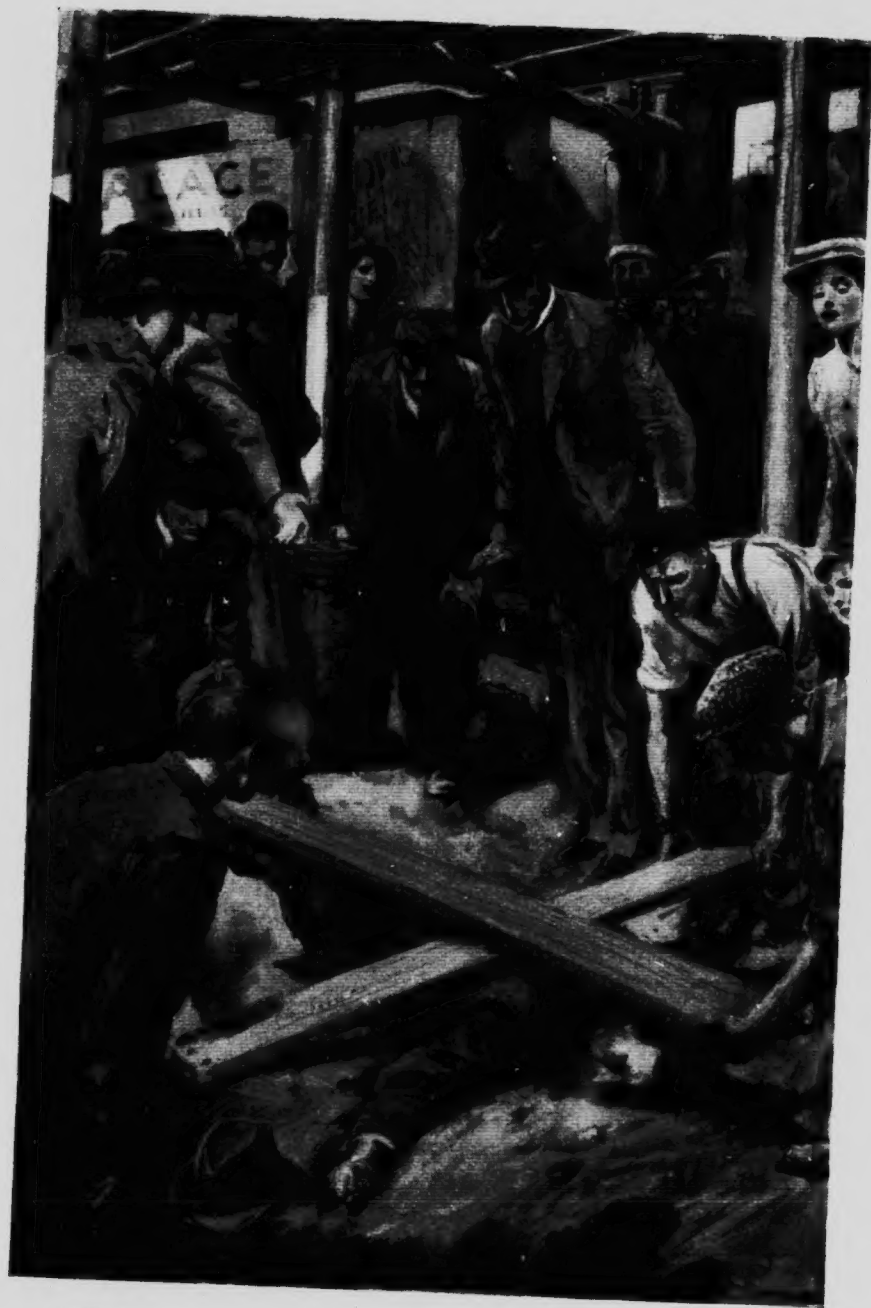
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THE ANGEL







"The two planks of timber had fallen over Joseph's back
in the exact form of The Cross." (Page 31.)

The Angel

[Frontispiece]

THE ANGEL

By
GUY THORNE

AUTHOR OF
"WHEN IT WAS DARK"
"FIRST HE WAS ORDAINED"
Etc.

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS



The sculpture of times and fallen over Joseph's back
in the form of "The Cross." (Page 311)

Frontispiece

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Dedication

TO THE

REVEREND AND MRS. HAROLD DAVIDSON,
THE RECTORY, STIFFKEY, NORFOLK.

My dear Mollie and Harold,—

I began this story during the "snows of yester-year" in your hospitable house, when the Winter wind blew keen from the North Sea and the great wild geese fell nightly to the guns upon the marshes. Then, when the Spring came, I carried my manuscript to the High Alps, and, there, among the most marvellously romantic scenery in the world, I wrote the middle portion. Alone, among the odorous pines, with the twin miracles of dawn and of sunset over the St. Gotthard Pass ever before our eyes, my wife and I often thought and talked of you both in your wonderful old Georgian house—a very stately setting for you dwellers by the sea! As you know, the book was, finally, nearly completed at Florence, under the shadow of Giotto's Campanile; but such are the coincidences of Friends'ip and of Fate that the last words were written in England—and at your house again!

To whom, then, of all my friends, could I more appropriately offer this book? If you never trouble to read it, though I hope that both of you will, give it to Sheilaigh, with a kiss from me, when she grows up and learns how to read!

Your attached friend,

GUY THORNE.

64, St. James' Street,
S.W.



PREFACE

I DO not think a book of this sort requires a very lengthy foreword, but one or two things I feel it necessary to say concerning it. In the first place, I have to thank Mr. Hamilton Edwards, for many valuable suggestions concerning it, suggestions which, undoubtedly, helped me very much in the writing.

The story is an attempt to impress upon readers the fact that we are, without doubt, surrounded on our way through life by unseen presences, unseen intelligences, which guard or attack that real portion of us, which is ourselves, the soul.

Superficially, but only superficially, this is a very material age. We are surrounded by so many material wonders that the unthinking person is inclined to believe, at any rate to state, that the material is everything. Yet there is nothing more unsatisfying than the purely material aspect of life, after all.

How can any one be surprised if the ordinary man is perplexed when he is called upon to decide questions

of economy and morality, when the material point of view is all that he can see? For all questions of morality must necessarily depend, as long ago Plato pointed out—upon a belief in something which we cannot touch or see. Otherwise morality has no significance and no meaning, except that of expediency.

If, when our body dies, our personality stops, then I can see no logical reason whatever for trying to be good. To get all this life in itself has to offer by means of any sort—provided they do not entail personal discomfort—is the logical philosophy of the materialist. Yet the materialist, at the same time, is very frequently an honest and good-living man. This is not *because* he is a materialist, for there is no reason for being honest, unless one is found out in one's dishonesty, but because there is implanted within that soul which he denies a spark of the Divine Fire.

Of course, amongst thinking and really educated men and women materialism is as out-moded as the bow and arrow in modern warfare, yet the majority of people do not think very much, nor are they well educated.

This story is an endeavour to point out that people who assert nowadays that Matthew Arnold's dogma, "miracles do not happen," are hopelessly out of the run of modern thought.

Men like Sir Oliver Lodge are laboriously discover-

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ing some of the laws of the Universe, which give us portents and signs. No one who knows to-day dares to sneer at parthenogenesis, or to repeat the slander of Celsus about the Mother of God. It is only men who do not know, and men who have grown rusty in reposing on their past reputations, who cannot see that Materialism as a philosophy is dead.

Day by day fresh evidence of the power of the Spirit over Matter bursts upon us. A plea for "philosophic doubt," for Professor Huxley's infallibility, is no longer necessary. The very distinction between Matter and Spirit grows more and more difficult as Science develops analytical power. The minds of men are being again prepared to receive that supreme revelation, which told of the wedding of the earth and Heaven, the taking of the Manhood into God.

The processes by which the hero of this story—Joseph—became what he was have been carefully thought out, in order to provide an opportunity for those who read the story, to get near to the explanation of some of those psychical truths which need not, necessarily, be supernatural, but only supernatural. It seems to me the wildest of folly to say that, because a thing is not capable of being explained by the laws of Nature as we know them, that it is *above* the laws of Nature. Every week is a witness to the fact that the laws of Nature are only imperfectly

known by us, and therefore, to say that anything is *outside* Nature is, to put it plainly, simply nonsense.

For Nature does not exist, nor is there any possibility that it has ever existed, without a Controlling Power, which created it.

At the very end of his famous and wonderful life, Lord Kelvin himself stated it as his unalterable opinion, after all the investigations he had made into the primary causes of phenomena as we know them, that the only possible explanation was, that a Controlling Intelligence animated and produced them all.

I was reading a few days ago one of a series of weekly articles which an eminent modern scientist, Sir Ray Lankester, is writing in a famous newspaper. He was speaking of Darwin and "The Origin of Species," and he seemed to imagine that the great discovery of Darwin finally disposed of the truth of the first chapter of Genesis, as we have it in the pages of the Holy Bible. Surely nothing was ever more limited than such a view as this! God manifests Himself in His own way—at His own time, and in a fashion which is modified and adjusted to the intelligences and opportunities of those who live at the time of this or that Revelation in the progressive scheme of Revelation itself. To say that because modern science has proved that God did not, as a human potter or modeller of clay would do, make the

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whole of living things in full being, and at a definite time, that therefore the Bible is untrue, is simply the blindness of those who do not realize that Truth must often wear a robe to hide its glory from the eyes of those who are unable to appreciate its full splendour and magnificence.

If we are descended or evolved from primeval protoplasm, as I for one am quite prepared to believe, one simply goes back to the simple question—"Who made the protoplasm?"

It is no use. We cannot get away, try as we will, from the fact of God, and we cannot also get away from the fact of the Incarnation, when God revealed Himself more fully than ever before, and when God Himself became Man.

My idea in this story is to show that, by means of processes of which we have at present but little idea, a man may be drained and emptied, under special circumstances, of himself and the influences of his past life, and be made as a vessel for the special in-pouring of the Holy Spirit.

The death of Lluellyn Lys for Joseph, the mysterious interplay of a soul going, and meeting on its way, another soul about to go into the Unknown, aided by the special dispensation of God, might, I think, well produce some such super-normal being as the Joseph of this tale. Perhaps an angel, one of those

mysterious beings—whom Christians believe to be the forces and the messengers of God—may have animated Joseph in his mission, without entirely destroying or obscuring his personality. Be this as it may, I offer this story as an effort to attract my readers' minds towards a consideration of the Unseen which is all around us, and which—more probably than not—is the real world, after all, and one in which, we, as we are now, walk as phantoms and simulacrums of what we shall one day be in the glorious hereafter.

GUY THORNE.

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CHAPTER I

AND GOD SPAKE——

TWO men stood outside a bird-fancier's shop in the East End of London. The shop was not far from the docks, and had a great traffic with sailors. Tiny emerald and gamboge love-birds squawked in their cages, there was a glass box of lizards with eyes like live rubies set in the shop window, while a hideous little ape—chained to a hook—clattered in an impish frenzy.

Outside the shop door hung a cage containing a huge parrot, and it was this at which the two men were looking.

Hampson, a little wrinkled man in very shabby clothes, but of a brave and confident aspect, pointed to the parrot.

"I wonder if it talks?" he said.

Immediately upon his words the grey bird, its watchful eye gleaming with mischievous fire, began a stream of disconnected words and sentences, very voluble, very rapid, and very clear.

Hampson shuddered.

"Do you know, Joseph," he said. "I am always afraid when I hear that sound—that noise of a bird talking human words. To me, there is no more dreadful sound in the world."

Hampson's companion, a taller and much more

considerable man, looked at the little fellow with surprise.

"Afraid?" he said. "Why should you be afraid? The sound is grotesque, and nothing more. Has hunger completed her work, and privation conquered at last? Are your nerves going?"

"Never better, my dear Joseph," the little man replied cheerfully. "It will take a long time to knock me out. It's you I'm afraid about. But to return to the parrot. Has it ever struck you that in all nature the voice of a bird that has been taught to speak is unique? There is no other sound even remotely resembling it. We hear a voice using human words, and, in this instance, and this alone, we hear the spoken words of a thing that has no soul!"

The other man started.

"How fantastic you are," he said impatiently. "The thing has a brain, hasn't it? You have in a larger and far more developed measure exactly what that bird has; so have I. But that is all. Soul! There is no such thing!"

The bird in the cage had caught the word, which excited its mechanical and oral memory to the repetition of one of its stock phrases.

"Soul! Soul! 'Pon my soul, that's too good. Ha, ha, ha!" said the parrot.

"Polly differs, apparently," Hampson said drily, as they moved on down the Commercial Road; "but what a hopeless materialist you are, Joseph. You go back to the dogmatism of the pre-Socratic philosophers or voice the drab materialism of the modern animal man who thinks with his skin. Yet you've read your Plato!—you observe that I carefully refrain from bringing in Christian philosophy even! You believe

in nothing that you have not touched or handled. Because you can't find the soul at a post-mortem examination of the body you at once go and say there is no such thing. Scholars and men of science like you seem astonishingly blind to the value of evidence when it comes to religious matters. You, my dear Joseph, have never seen India. Yet you know a place called India exists. How do you know it? Simply through the evidence of other people who have been there. You have just as much right to tell the captain of a P. & O. steamer that what he thought was Calcutta was merely a delusion as to tell me or any other professing Christian that there is no such thing as the Kingdom of Heaven! Well, I must be off; I have a bit of work to do that may bring in a few shillings. There may be dinner to-night, Joseph!"

With a quick smile, Hampson turned down a side street and was gone. The man called Joseph continued his way, walking slowly and listlessly, his head sunk upon his breast in thought.

The teeming life of the great artery of East London went on all round him; but he saw nothing of it. A Chinaman, with a yellow, wrinkled face, jostled up against him, and he did not know it; a bloated girl, in a stained plush blouse, wine-coloured like her face, and with an immense necklace of false pearls, coughed out some witticism as he passed; a hooligan surveved him at leisure, decided that there could be nothing worth stealing upon him, and strolled away whistling a popular tune—one and all were no more to the wanderer than a dream, some dream dim-panelled upon the painted scenes of sleep.

Shabbily dressed as he was, there was yet something about the man which attracted attention. He drew

the eye. He was quite unlike any one else. One could not say of him, "Here is an Englishman," or "There is a German." He would have looked like a foreigner—something alien from the crowd—in any country to which he went.

Joseph's age was probably about thirty-three, but time and sorrow had etched and graven upon his face a record of harsh experience which made him seem much older.

The cheeks were gashed and furrowed with thought. Looking carefully at him, one would have discovered that he was a distinctly handsome man. The mouth was strong and manly in its curves, though there was something gentle and compassionate in it also. The nose was Greek, straight and clearly cut; the hair thick, and of a dark reddish-brown. But the wonder of the man's face lay in his eyes. These were large and lustrous; full of changing light in their dark and almost Eastern depth. They were those rare eyes which seem to be lit up from within as if illuminated by the lamp of the soul.

Soul! Yes, it was that of which those eyes told in an extraordinary and almost overwhelming measure.

The soul is not a sort of fixed essence, as people are apt to forget. It is a fluid thing, and expands or contracts according to the life of its owner. We do not, for example, see any soul in the eyes of a gross, over-fed, and sensual man. Yet this very man in the Commercial Road, who denied the very existence of the soul with convinced and impatient mockery, was himself, in appearance, at any rate, one of those rare beings of whom we say, "That man is all soul."

The man's full name was Joseph Bethune. To the tiny circle of his friends and acquaintances he was

simply Joseph. If they had ever known his surname, they had forgotten it. He was one of those men who are always called by their Christian names because, whatever their circumstances may be, they are real, accepted, and unquestioned facts in the lives of their friends.

Joseph Bethune's history, to which he never referred, had been, up to the present, drab, monotonous, and dismal. When an event had occurred it was another failure, and he could point to no red-letter days in his career. Joseph had never known either father or mother. Both had died during his infancy, leaving him in the care of guardians.

His father had been a pastor of the Methodist sect—a man of singular holiness of life and deep spiritual fervour. Possessed of some private means, he had been able to leave a sufficient sum for his son's education upon a generous and liberal scale.

The boy's guardians were distant relatives in each case. One was a clergyman, the other a prosperous London solicitor. The strange, studious child, quiet, dreamy, and devoted to his books, found himself out of touch with both.

The clergyman was a Low Churchman, but of the worst type. There was nothing of the tolerant outlook and strong evangelical piety of a Robertson in Mr. St. John. He was as narrow as his creed, condemning all that he had not experienced, or could not understand, hating the devil more than he loved God. If he had been sent to the rack he could not have truthfully confessed to an original thought.

Joseph Bethune was sent to an English public school of good, though not of first, rank. Here he was unpopular, and made no friends. His nature was

too strong, and, even as a boy, his personality too striking, for him to experience any actual physical discomfort from his unpopularity. He was never bullied, and no one interfered with him; but he remained utterly lonely.

In contradiction to the usual custom in the English public schools of his day, Hailton possessed splendid laboratories, and great attention was paid to modern science and mathematics.

Of these advantages Joseph Bethune availed himself to the full. His temper of mind was accurate and inquiring, and though his manner was dreamy and abstracted, it was the romance of science over which he pored; the cold, glacial heights of the higher mathematics among which his imagination roamed.

He gained a scholarship at Cambridge, lived a retired and monotonous life of work, shunning the natural and innocent amusements of youth while at the university, and was bracketed Third Wrangler as a result of his degree examination.

By this time his moderate patrimony was nearly exhausted, though, of course, his success in the schools had placed many lucrative posts within his reach. He had actually been offered a fellowship and a tutorial post at his own college, when he wrecked his university career by an extraordinary and quite unexpected proceeding.

At a great meeting in the Corn Exchange, convened by the Bishop of London for a discussion of certain vexed questions of the Christian faith, Joseph Bethune rose, and, in a speech of some fifteen minutes' duration, delivered an impassioned condemnation of Christianity, concluding with a fierce avowal of his disbelief in God, and in anything but the purely material.

We are tolerant enough nowadays. The red horror of the Inquisition has departed, and men are no longer "clothed in a shirt of living fire" for a chance word. A "Protestant" ruler no longer hangs the priests of the Italian Mission for saying the Mass. Any one is at liberty to believe what he pleases. But men about to occupy official positions must not bawl unadulterated atheism from the housetops.

The offence was too flagrant, the offer of the fellowship was withdrawn, and Joseph, so far as Cambridge was concerned, was ruined.

It is perfectly true that there were many people who believed exactly as he did. They sympathized with him, but in secret, and no word or hint of their sympathy ever reached him. He had done the unpardonable thing: he had dared to speak out his thoughts, and men of the world do not care to champion openly one who is publicly disgraced.

The news got about in many quarters. The man was not an "agnostic"—polite and windy word! But he was an atheist! Terrible word, recalling shuddering memories of Tom Paine and Bradlaugh even in the minds of men and women who themselves believed in nothing at all. Some men would have only been locally harmed by such an episode as this. But Bethune's case was peculiar, and it ruined him.

He had nothing to sell in any market but the academic. He was a born lecturer; demonstrator of scientific truth. But he had just overstepped the limit allowed in even these liberal times. Moreover, he was too young. Such a speech as he had made, had it been delivered at sixty, with a long and distinguished record behind the speaker, would have been regarded as a valuable and interesting contribution

to modern thought. It might even have been taken as a sort of fifth Gospel—the Gospel according to St. Thomas the Doubter!

Joseph, however, was done for.

He disappeared from the university. His name was no more heard, and after the traditional nine days was utterly forgotten.

It is true that three or four men who saw further than their fellows realized that a force, a potential but very real force, had departed. Some one who, as they believed, was to have done extraordinary things was now crushed and robbed of his power. They perceived that virtue had departed from the intellectual garment that shelters the men who *can*!

Joseph tried, and tried in vain, to make such a living as his vast mental acquirements and achievements entitled him to. Obscure tutorships, ill-paid lecturing to coteries of cock-sure Socialists, who believed in nothing but their chances of getting a slice of the wealth of men who had worked, and not merely talked—these were his dismal and pitiful endeavours.

He came at last to the very lowest pitch of all. He, the high wrangler, the eminent young mathematician, earned a squalid and horribly precarious living by teaching elementary science to the sons of struggling East End shopkeepers who were ambitious of County Council scholarships for their progeny.

His health was impaired, but his spirit was as a reed bruised and shaken by the winds of adversity, yet not broken. He had known sorrow, was acquainted with grief.

He had plumbed the depths of poverty, and his body was a wreck. Want of food—the mean and squalid resting-places he had perforce to seek—the

degradation and vileness of his surroundings, had sapped the life blood. He did not know the defiant trumpet words of a poet of our time, but had he done so, they would have well expressed his attitude—

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.
In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud ;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

He turned off into a by-street, and walked on till he came to the docks. His progress was quite aimless. Once he stopped and wearily asked himself whither he was going ; but the next moment he was lost in thought, and moved on again.

Once he stumbled over a steel hawser. He nearly lost his balance, and had his arm not shot out with an involuntary movement to clutch the bollard on his left, he would have fallen over the granite-bound edge of the wharf into the foul, black, slimy depths below.

Hardly giving a thought to the danger he had just escaped, he moved on and on.

Through open sheds—where freight was heaped up waiting the onslaught of stevedores and labourers—across jutting portions of cobbled space and shunting grounds, he came to a remote corner, far removed from the rattle of cranes and the shouts of the workmen.

Something drew him out of himself, and fixed his attention. It was a shadow. It caught his gaze, and his eyes became fixed upon it. He knew that a shadow was only the phenomenon produced when streams of radiant energy are intercepted by an

object which is unable to transmit them. His scientific training had taught him that even *sound* shadows may be produced, though to recognize the existence of them the ear must pass from the unshadowed to the shadowed part. Perhaps it was a symbol! He himself was in darkness and shadow. Would his ear ever catch those mysterious harmonies that come to those who suffer?—Hampson heard them. . . .

A woman crept stealthily behind the wall, and the shadow disappeared.

The woman bore a burden; what it was he could not see. But she held it close to her breast with the tense clasp of some fierce emotion.

She had not noticed the dreamer. She stopped by some steps leading down to the waters of a small section of the dock.

Joseph sat down on a capstan and looked steadily at her.

The woman unclasped the burden she bore, drew aside a part of the covering, and kissed—a baby face. He knew at once what she was doing. She was bidding it good-bye. She was going to drown it.

"And they say that there is a God," Joseph thought. "A conscious Intelligence that directs human affairs. Even Lord Kelvin himself thought so! Yet God does nothing to save this woman from her sin—or rather crime!"

He gazed fiercely. Those eyes, through which his rebellious unconquerable soul shone out, caught the startled stare of the woman as she saw the strange man who watched her.

The man said nothing. The woman thought: "If he prevents me now, I shall—I must do it later. He

can't change me. If he gives me in charge he can't prove it. I've done nothing yet."

Yet she looked again, and this time did not turn away.

A strange magnetism which seemed to run through her, projected from those eyes, was making even her finger-tips tingle as with a new sensation, and one she had never known before. Her purpose melted and dissolved in that flow of more than electric influence; it changed as fire changes a material thing. It melted like snow before the radiant energy of the sun.

Slowly she unwrapped the bundle. The paper, the cloth wrappings she threw into the black and oily water, but the child she clasped to her breast.

"My baby," she murmured, very quietly, but in tones that pierced the tense atmosphere and reached Joseph's ear, "I bore you in shame, and was about to kill you to save you from shame like mine; but I will bear my cross and love you for the sake of Jesus. Amen."

She stole away, trembling. There was a great fear and wonder at her heart, and the watcher saw no more.

Joseph smiled bitterly. His brain seemed some detached thing, a theatre upon the stage of which wild thoughts were the conflicting actors and his subconscious intelligence the spectator,

The simile of the shadow returned to him, and was it not all a shadow—this dark, unhappy life of his? The words "radiant energy," the words "God" "conscious force" danced before him. The whole sentient world was reeling—the blood that fed the grey matter of his brain was poor and thin—this was the reason.

Yet, was it the reason, after all? What had happened to him in the last few minutes? He felt as he had never in his whole life felt before. There was a sense of extraordinary impotence. Something had come into him; something had gone out of him.

No!—something had gone *through* him—that was the way to describe it to himself. . . .

Oh for food, rich nourishing food, quiet and fresh air—then all this sickness would go. . . .

* * * *

Joseph left the docks, and was soon back in the teeming Commercial Road. He walked, lost in thought, unconscious of all his surroundings.

"Nah, then, Monkey Brand, 'oo y'r shovin'? I can see y'r gettin' a thick ear, young feller-my-lad! Owns the bloomin' pyvement——"

A string of obscene oaths and the above words brought Joseph the dreamer down to earth again—the world of the Commercial Road.

He had stumbled against a typical bullet-headed, wicked-eyed East End rough.

The man stepped close up to Joseph, lifting an impudent and dirty face, holding the right arm ready to strike the short, jabbing blow so dear to the hooligan.

Then a strange thing happened.

Joseph, roused so suddenly and rudely from his bitter reverie, became aware of what was toward. He was about to apologize 'o the man when his words were checked in his mouth by the fellow's filthy profanity. Joseph suddenly, instead of speaking, turned his full face to him. The great, blazing eyes, their brilliancy accentuated a hundred times by hunger and scorn, seemed to cleave their way through the thick skull of the aggressor, to pierce the muddy and

besotted brain within, to strike fear into the small leathern heart.

The man lifted his arm and covered his face, just like a street child who expects a blow; and then with a curious sound, half whimper, half snarl, turned and made off in a moment.

It was an extraordinary instance of magnetic power inherent in this starving scholar who roamed the streets in a sad dream.

On his own part, Joseph's action had been quite unconscious. He had no thought of the force stored in him as in an electric accumulator. Some experiments in animal magnetism he had certainly made, when he had taken a passing interest in the subject at Cambridge. He had cured his "gyp" of a bad attack of neuralgia once, or at least the man said he had, but that was as far as it had gone.

He turned his steps towards the stifling attic he called "home." After all, he was better there than in the streets. Besides, he was using up what little strength remained to him in this aimless wandering.

He had eaten nothing that day, but at nine in the evening he had a lesson to give. This would mean a shilling, and there were two more owing from his pupil, so that even if Hampson, who lived in the next garret, failed to get any money, both might eat ere they slept.

As he turned into the court and began to mount the stairs, Joseph thought with an involuntary sigh of "hall" at Cambridge, the groaning tables, the generous fare, the comely and gracious life of it all.

And he had thrown it all away—for what? Just for the privilege of speaking out his thoughts, thoughts which nobody particularly wanted to hear.

With a sigh of exhaustion he sat down on the miserable little bed under the rafters, and stared out of the dirty window over the roofs of Whitechapel.

Had he been right, after all? Was it worth while to do as he had done, to give up all for the truth that was in him. The old spirit of revolt awoke. Yes he had been right a thousand times! No man must act or live a lie.

But supposing it *was* all true? Supposing there was a God after all. Supposing that the Christ upon whom that woman had called so glibly really was the Saviour of mankind? Then—— The thought fell upon his consciousness like a blow from a whip.

He leapt to his feet in something like fear.

"It's this physical exhaustion," he said to himself aloud, trying to find an anodyne to thought in the sound of his own voice. "My brain is starved for want of blood. No one can live as I have been living and retain a sane judgment. It was because the hermits of old starved themselves in the desert that they saw visions. Yet it is odd that I, of all men, should weaken thus. I must go out into the streets again, come what may. The mind feeds upon itself and conjures up wild and foolish thoughts in a horrible little box like this."

With a heavy sigh he went slowly out of the room and down the steep stairs. Never in all his life had he felt so lost and hopeless; so alone and deserted.

Another man in his position would have called out upon God, either with mad and puny revilings in that He had forsaken him, or with a last piteous cry for help.

Joseph did not believe in God.

All his life he had lived without God. He had

ignored the love of the Father and the necessity of faith in His Son Jesus Christ. The temple of his body was all empty of the Paraclete. Now he felt sure that there was no God; never had been any God; never would be any God.

He was at the darkest hour of all, and yet, with a strange nervous force, he clenched one lean hand until the shrunken muscle sprang up in coils upon the back of it, resolving that come what might he would not give in. There was no God, only a blind giant, Circumstance—well, he would fight that!

His mental attitude was a curious one, curiously illogical. Keen and well-balanced as the scientific side of him was, the man—like all those who openly profess disbelief—was unable to see what might almost be called the grim humour of his attitude.

"I do not believe in God!" the atheist cries, and then immediately afterwards shakes his fist at the Almighty and bids Him to do His worst!

Man challenging God! There is no more grotesque and terrible thing in human life than this.

But, as the world knows now, God had a special purpose in his dealings with this man.

All unconscious of what was to befall him, of his high destiny to come, Joseph walked aimlessly in Whitechapel, cursing in his heart the God in whom he did not believe, and yet who had already chosen him to be the centre and head of mighty issues. . . . A channel, as we may think now. . . .

We may well believe that each single step that Joseph took was known and regulated by unseen hands, voices which were unheard by ear or brain, but which the unconscious and sleeping soul nevertheless obeyed.

At last the Almighty spoke, and the first link in the chain of His mysterious operations was forged.

Joseph was walking slowly past a great building which was in course of erection or alteration. A network of scaffolding rose up into the smoky, dun-coloured sky.

The clipping of steel chisels upon stone, the echoing noise of falling planks, the hoarse voices of the workmen as they called to each other high up on their insecure perches, all rose above the deep diapason note of the traffic in a welter of sharply-defined sound.

Joseph stepped upon the pavement beneath the busy works. He was, he noticed, just opposite the office of the small East End newspaper for which Hampson, the poor, half-starved, but cheery little journalist did occasional jobs.

Hampson—good, kind, little Hampson! It was pleasant to think of him, and as he did so, Joseph's thoughts lost their bitterness for a moment. Only the utterly vile can contemplate real unassuming goodness and unselfishness without a certain warming of the heart.

Hampson was only half educated—he had the very greatest difficulty in making a living, yet he was always bright and happy, ever illuminated by some inward joy.

Even as he thought of Hampson—almost his only friend—Joseph saw the man himself coming out of the narrow doorway. Hampson saw the scholar at once, in his quick, bird-like way, and waved his hand with a significant and triumphant gesture.

There was to be dinner, then!

It was not so. The two poor friends were not to

share a humble meal together on that night, at any rate.

High above Joseph's head, two planks were being slowly hauled upwards to the topmost part of the scaffolding. They were secured by the usual halter knot round the centre. The noose, however, had slipped, as the rope was a new one, and the two heavy pieces of timber hung downwards, with the securing tie perilously near the upper end.

There was a sudden shout of alarm, which sent a hundred startled faces peering upwards, and then the planks fell right upon the man who stood beneath, crushing him to the ground, face downwards, like a broken blade of grass.

With the magic celerity which is part of the psychology of crowds, a ring of excited people sprang round the crushed, motionless figure, as if at the bidding of a magician's wand.

Willing hands began to lift the great beams from it. Hampson had been one of the first to see and realize the accident.

He was by the side of his friend in three or four seconds after the planks had struck him down. And he saw something that, even in his horror and excitement, sent a strange inexplicable throb through his blood and made all his pulses drum with a sense of quickening, of nearness to the Unseen, such as he had never experienced in all his life before.

It is given to those who are very near to God to see visions, sometimes to draw very close to the Great Veil.

The two planks of timber had fallen over Joseph's back in the exact form of The Cross. To the little journalist, if to no one else in the rapidly-gathering

crowd, the wood and the bowed figure below it brought back the memory of a great picture he had seen, a picture of the Via Dolorosa, when Jesus fainted and fell under the weight He bore.

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CHAPTER II

"SOMETHING MARVELLOUS IS GOING TO HAPPEN"

IN the drawing-room of a house in Berkeley Square, Lady Kirwan—the wife of Sir Augustus Kirwan, the great banker—was arguing with her niece, Mary Lys.

The elder lady was tall and stately, and although not aggressive in any way, her manner was distinctly that of one accustomed to rule. Her steady grey eyes and curved, rather beak-like nose gave her an aspect of sternness which was genially relieved by a large, good-humoured mouth. At fifty, Lady Kirwan's hair was still dark and glossy, and time had dealt very gently with her.

Of the old Welsh family of Lys, now bereft of all its great heritage of the past, but with a serene and lofty pride in its great name still, she had married Sir Augustus, then Mr. Kirwan, in early girlhood. As the years went on, and her husband's vast wealth grew vaster still, and he rose to be one of the financial princes of the world, Lady Kirwan became a very prominent figure in society, and at fifty she had made herself one of the hundred people who really rule it.

One daughter, Marjorie, was born to Sir Augustus and his wife, a beauty, and one of the most popular girls in society.

"You may say what you like, but I have no patience at all with either you or your crack-brained brother,

Mary!" Lady Kirwan exclaimed, with an irritable rapping of her fingers upon a little lapis lazuli table at her side.

Mary Lys was a tall girl, dressed in the blue uniform of a hospital nurse. The cloak was thrown back over her shoulders, and its scarlet lining threw up the perfect oval contour of her face and the glorious masses of black hair that crowned it. If Marjorie Kirwan was generally said to be one of the prettiest girls in London—and the couple of millions she would inherit by no means detracted from her good looks—certainly Mary Lys might have been called one of the most beautiful.

The perfect lips, graver than the lips of most girls, almost maternal in their gentleness, formed, as it were, the just complement to the great grey eyes, with their long dark lashes and delicately-curved black brows. The chin was broad and firm, but very womanly, and over all that lovely face brooded a holy peace, a high serenity, and a watchful tenderness that one sees in the pictures of the old masters when they drew the pious maids and matrons who followed the footsteps of Our Lord on earth.

Her beauty was not the sort of beauty which would attract every one. It was, indeed, physical beauty in perfection, but irradiated also by loveliness of soul. The common-minded man who prefers the conscious and vulgar prettiness of some theatre girl, posed for the lens of the camera or the admiring glances of the crowd, would have said:—

"Oh, yes, she's beautiful, of course! One can't help admitting that. But she's not my style a bit. Give me something with a little more life in it."

But there were not wanting many men and women

who said that they had thought that the mother of the Saviour must have looked like Mary Lys.

"No! I've really no patience with either of you!" Lady Kirwan repeated.

"But, Aunt Ethel, surely we ought to live our own lives. I am quite happy with my nursing in the East End. One can't do more good than by trying to nurse and cure the sick, can one? And Lluellyn is happy also in his Welsh mountains. He lives a very saintly life, auntie—a life of prayer and preaching and good works, even if it is unconventional and seems strange to you. I would not have it otherwise. Lluellyn is not suited for the modern world."

"Fiddlesticks, Mary!" Lady Kirwan answered. "'Modern world,' indeed! You speak as if you said 'Modern pestilence'! Who made the world, I should like to know? And what right have you and your brother to despise it? I'm sick of all this nonsense. How a girl with your looks and of your blood, for there is hardly a peer in England with such a pedigree as that of our family, can go on grubbing away nursing horrible people with horrible diseases in that dreadful East End I can't possibly imagine. You've no money, of course, for your two hundred a year is a mere nothing. But what does that matter? Haven't your uncle and I more than we know what to do with? Marjorie has already an enormous fortune settled upon her. She is almost certain to marry the Duke of Dover next season. Well, what do we offer you—you and Lluellyn? You are to be as our second daughter. We will give you everything that a girl can have in this world. You shall share in our wealth as if you were my own daughter. With your looks and the money which is available for you, you may

marry any one. We stand well at Court. His Majesty is pleased when one of the great old families of the realm restores its fallen fortunes. Every chance and opportunity is yours. As for your brother, as I have so often written and told him, he will be a son to us. We have not been given a son; he shall become one. There is enough and to spare for all. Give up this nonsense of yours. Make Lluellyn come to his senses and leave his absurd hermit life, and this mad preaching about in the mountain villages. Come to us at once, both of you. What more could any one offer you, child? Am I not pleading with you out of my love for you and my nephew, out of a sincere desire to see you both take your proper place in the world?"

Lady Kirwan stopped, a little out of breath after her long speech, every word of which had been uttered with the sincerest conviction and prompted by real affection.

There was probably no more worldly woman in London than the kindly wife of the great financier. The world was all in all to her, and she was as destitute of religion or any knowledge of spiritual things as the parish pump. She would not have divided her last shilling with any one, but she was generous with her superfluity.

And certainly one of the great wishes of her life was to see the ancient family from which she had sprung once more take a great place in life. She felt within her veins the blood of those old wild princes of the "stormy hills of Wales"—those Arthurs and Uthers, Caradocs and Lluellyns innumerable, who had kept their warlike courts in the dear mountains of her home.

It was monstrous, it was incredible to Lady Kirwan that the last two survivors of the Lys family in the direct line should live obscure, strange lives away from the world. Mary Lys a hospital nurse in the East End! Lluellyn Lys a sort of anchorite and itinerant preacher! It was inconceivable; it must be stopped.

"I will write to Lluellyn again, auntie," Mary said, rising from her chair. "But, honestly, I fear it will be of little use. And as for myself——"

As she spoke the door opened, and a footman entered the room.

"Miss Marjorie has returned, my lady," he said. "She is waiting below in the motor-brougham. I was to say that if Miss Lys was ready, Miss Marjorie has a free hour, and will drive Miss Lys back to the hospital."

"There, there!" Lady Kirwan said to her niece, "Marjorie will take you back to that place. It will be more comfortable than a horrid, stuffy omnibus. Now don't give me any answer at present, but just think over what I have said very seriously. Come again in a week, and we will have another talk. Don't be in a hurry to decide. And remember, dear, that with all your exaggerated ideas of duty, you may owe a duty to your relations and to society quite as much as to indigent aliens in Whitechapel. Run along, and be a dear good girl, and be sure you don't catch some dreadful infectious disease."

A couple of footmen in knee-breeches, silk stockings, and powdered hair stood on each side of the door. A ponderous butler opened it, another footman in motor livery jumped down from his seat beside the driver and held open the door of the brougham.

"All this pomp and circumstance," Mary thought sadly, "to get a poor hospital nurse out of a house and into a carriage. Four great men are employed to do so simple a thing as that, and whole families of my dear people are starving while the breadwinner lies sick in the hospital!"

She sighed heavily, and her face was sad as she kissed the brilliant, vivacious cousin who was waiting in the brougham.

"Well, you poor dear," Marjorie Kirwan said "And how are you? I suppose the usual thing has happened? Mother has been imploring you to take a proper place in the world—you and my delightfully mysterious cousin Lluellyn, who is quite like an old Hebrew prophet—and you have said that you prefer your grubby scarlet-fever friends in Whitechapel!"

Mary nodded.

"Dear auntie," she said. "She is wonderfully kind and good, but she doesn't quite understand. But don't let us talk about it."

"Very well, then, we won't," Marjorie answered affectionately. "Every one must gang their own gait! You don't like what I like; I don't like what you like. The great thing is to be happy, and we're both that. Tell me something of your work. It always interests me. Have you had any new adventures in Whitechapel?"

"Everything has been much the same," she said, "except that a very wonderful personality has come into the hospital."

"Oh, how delightful! A man, of course! Do tell me all about him!"

"His name is Joseph. It sounds odd, but he

doesn't seem to use his surname at all. I did hear it, but I have forgotten. He is simply Joseph. He was hurt, though not nearly as badly as he might have been, by some falling planks from a house they were building. But he was in a dreadfully exhausted and run-down condition—nearly starved indeed. He is a great scholar and scientist, but he was ruined some years ago because he made a speech against God and religion, at Cambridge, before all the dignitaries."

"And are you converting him?"

"No. That is no woman's work, with this man. He is in a strange state. We have nursed him back to something like health, but his mind seems quite empty. At first, when we had some talks together, he railed against God—always with the proviso that there wasn't any God! Now he is changed, with returning health. He is like an empty vessel, waiting for something to be poured into it. He neither disbelieves nor believes. Something has washed his mind clear."

"How extraordinary!"

"Extraordinary you say; but listen! Three days ago—it was in the early evening—he called me to his bedside. He drew his hand from the bedclothes and laid it on my arm. How I thrilled at the touch, I cannot explain." . . .

"But, my dear, think of Tom—— This is extraordinary!"

"I've thought of Thomas; but, Marjorie, you cannot know—it was not that kind of love. It was nothing like love. Perhaps I put it badly, but you jumped to quite a wrong conclusion. It was something quite different. His eyes seemed to transfix me. The touch—the eyes—the thrill they sent

through me will remain as long as I live ! But listen. He spoke to me as he hadn't spoken before. ' Mary,' he said——"

" Did he call you *Mary* ? "

" He had never done so before—he did then. Before I had always been ' Nurse ' to him."

" Well, go on, dear—I am quite interested."

" He said, ' Mary, you are going off duty in a few minutes. Go to the upper chamber of 24, Grey Street, Hoxton, and walk straight in. There is one that has need of you.' I was about to expostulate, but he fell back in exhaustion, and I called the house surgeon."

" You surely didn't go ? "

" Yes, I went," Mary went on rapidly. " Something made me go. The low door of Number 24 was open. I climbed till I got to the top. There was no light anywhere. It was a miserable foggy evening. I felt for a door, and found one at last. It yielded to my hand, and I entered an attic which was immediately under the roof."

" Nothing could be seen. I had come unprepared for such darkness. But taking courage I asked aloud if there was any one there."

" There was no answer. Yet I felt—I had a curious certainty—that I was not alone. I waited—and waited. Then I moved slowly about the room. I was afraid to move with any freedom for fear of stumbling over—something or other."

" Suddenly a costermonger's barrow came into the court below. The naphtha lamps lit up the whole place and the room was suddenly illuminated with a flickering red light. I could see quite well now."

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"I am accustomed to rather dreadful things, as you know, Marjorie—or at least things which you would think rather dreadful. But I will confess, I was frightened out of my life now. I gave a shriek of terror, and then stood trembling, utterly unable to move!"

"What was it?"

"I saw a man hanging by a rope to the rafters. His jaw had fallen down, and his tongue was protruding. I shall never forget how the red light from the court below glistened on his tongue—His eyes were starting out of his head. . . . It was horrible."

"Oh, how frightful! I should have been frightened to death," said Marjorie, and a cold shiver ran through her whole body, which Mary could feel, as her cousin nestled closer to her in the brougham.

"Yes, it was awful! I had never seen anything so awful before—except once, perhaps, at an operation for cancer. But, do you know, Marjorie, I was quite unlike my usual self. I was acting under some strange influence. The eyes of that poor man, Joseph, seemed to be following me. I acted as I never should have been able to act unless something very curious and inexplicable was urging me. I knew exactly what I had to do.

"I am experienced in these things, as you know, and I saw at once that the man who was hanging from the roof was not dead. He was only just beginning the last agony. There was a big box by the window, and upon a little table I saw an ordinary table-knife. I dragged the box to the man's feet, put them upon it, caught hold of the knife, and cut him down.

He was a small man, and fell limply back into my arms, nearly knocking me over the box, but I managed to support him, and staggered down on to the floor.

Then I got the rope from round his neck, and tried to restore breathing by Hall's method—you know, one can use this method by oneself. It is really the basis of all methods, and is used very successfully in cases of drowning."

"What did you do then?" Marjorie asked.

"As soon as he began to breathe again I rushed downstairs. In a room at the bottom of the stairs, which was lit by a little cheap paraffin lamp there was a horrid old woman, an evil-looking young man, and several children. The old woman was frying some dreadful sort of fish for supper, and I was nearly stifled.

"To cut a long story short, I sent the children out for a cab, made the young fellow come upstairs, and together we brought down the man, who was in a semi-conscious state. No questions were asked because, as you know, or at least, as is a fact, a nurse's uniform commands respect everywhere. I took the man straight to the hospital, and managed to hush the matter up, and to arrange with the house surgeon. Of course I could not tell the doctors everything, but they trusted me, and nothing was said at all. The man was discharged as cured a few days ago. The poor fellow had attempted his life in a fit of temporary madness. He was very nearly starving. There is no doubt at all about it. He proved it to the satisfaction of the hospital authorities."

"And have you found out who he is?"

"He is a friend of Joseph's—a comrade in his

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poverty, a journalist called Hampson, and the garret was where Joseph and he had lived together."

"Extraordinary is not the word for all this," Marjorie interrupted. "It almost frightens me to hear about it."

"But even that is not all. When I got back to the hospital after seeing the would-be suicide in safe keeping, I went straight to my own ward."

"Joseph was awake. He turned to me as I entered, smiled, and said in a sort of whisper. 'Inasmuch.' I could hear no more."

"From that time his mind seemed to lapse into the same state—a state of complete blank. He is waiting."

"For what?"

"Ah, here comes the most strange part of it all. I have received an extraordinary letter from Lluellyn. My brother has strange psychic powers, Marjorie—powers that have often been manifested in a way which the world knows nothing of, in a way which you would find it impossible to believe. In some way my brother has known of this man's presence in the hospital. Our minds have acted one upon the other over all the vast material distance which separates us. He wrote to me: 'As soon as the man Joseph is recovered, send him to me. He will question, but he will come. The Lord has need of him, for he shall be as a great sword in the hand of the Most High.'"

Marjorie Kirwan shivered.

"You speak of mystical things," she said. "They are too deep for me. They frighten me. Mary, you speak as if something was going to happen! What do you mean?"

"I speak as I feel, dear," Mary answered, with a

deep-ringing certainty in her voice. "How or why, I do not know, but a marvellous thing is going to happen! I feel the sense of it. It quickens all my life. I wait for that which is to come. A new force is to be born into the world, a new light is to be kindled in the present darkness. The lonely mystic of the mountain and the strange-eyed man who has come into my life are, even now, in mysterious spiritual communion. This very afternoon Joseph goes to Lluellyn. I said good-bye to him before I left the East-End. What will be the issue, my poor vision cannot tell me yet."

Through the hum the maiden of the world heard Mary's deep, steadfast voice.

"Something great is going to happen. Now is the acceptable hour!"

It was utterly outside her experience. It was a voice which chilled and frightened her. She didn't want to hear voices like this.

Even as Mary spoke, Marjorie Kirwan heard a change in her voice. The brougham was quite still, and the long string of vehicles which were passing in the other direction were motionless also.

Mary was staring out of the window at a hansom cab that was its immediate *vis-a-vis*.

Two men were in the cab.

One of them, a small, eager-faced man flushed with excitement, was bowing to Mary.

The other, taller, and very pale of face, was looking at the hospital nurse with the wildest and most burning gaze the society girl had ever seen.

"Who are they?" Marjorie whispered, though even as she asked she knew.

"The man I saved from death," Mary answered,

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in a low, quivering voice, " and the man Joseph—
Joseph ! "

She sank back against the cushions of the carriage
in a dead faint.

CHAPTER III

NEARER

JOSEPH turned to his companion.

His face was white and worn by his long illness, but now it was suddenly overspread with a ghastly and livid greyness.

He murmured something far down in his throat, and at the inarticulate sound, Hampson, who had been bowing with a flush of gratitude to Mary, turned in alarm.

He saw a strange sight, and, though he—in common with many others—was to become accustomed to it in the future, he never forgot his first impression.

Joseph's head had sunk back against the cushions of the cab. His mouth was open, the jaw having fallen a little, as though he had no control of it.

In a flash the terrible thought came to the journalist that his friend was in the actual throes of death.

Then, in another second or two, just as the block in the traffic ceased, and the cab moved on again, he knew that Joseph lived. The eyes which at first were dark and lustreless—had seemed to be turned inward, as it were—suddenly blazed out into life. Their expression was extraordinary. It appeared to Hampson as if Joseph saw far away into an illimitable distance. So some breathless watcher upon a mountain-top, who searched a far horizon for the coming of a great

army might have looked. A huge eagle circling round the lonely summit of an Alp might have such a strange light in its far-seeing eyes.

At what was the man looking? Surely it was no narrow vision bounded by the bricks and mortar, the busy vista of the London Strand!

Then, in a flash, the journalist knew.

Those eyes saw no mortal vision, were not bounded by the material circumstance of place and time. They looked into the future.

It was thus that Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, looked when the word of the Lord came to him.

Unconsciously Hampson spoke a verse from Holy Writ—

"Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth."

Then Joseph began to speak, and never had his friend heard a man speak in this fashion.

The lips moved very little. The fixed far-off light remained in the eyes, the face did not change with the words as the face of an ordinary man does.

"I hear a voice; and the voice says to me, 'Thou therefore gird up thy loins and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.' The words, which seemed to come from a vast distance, though they were very keen, vibrant and clear, dropped in tone, and ceased for a moment. Then once more they began—

"And I see the woman Mary and the one that was with her. They are with me upon an hill-top. And they are as maids that have forgotten their ornaments, and as brides that have not remembered their attire.

And below us I see great cities and busy markets, the movements of multitudes, and the coming and going of ships. And I see that the maid and I and those others who are with us upon the mountain pray to God. And God touches my mouth, and I go down from the hill and those that are with me, to root out, to pull down and destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

Trembling with eagerness and excitement, Hampson listened to these extraordinary words.

Ever since the black hour when he had been rescued from the consequences of his sudden madness, the journalist had known that there was something very wonderful about his friend. Hampson could not, in justice to himself, blame himself for his attempt at suicide. He knew that he had not been responsible for what he did. The long privations of his life, the sudden accident to Joseph in the Whitechapel Road, had been too much for a sensitive and highly-strung nature. Gradually but surely reason had been temporarily undermined, and Hampson had only a very slight remembrance of the events in the fortnight which had preceded his attempt. It was in the hospital, after the careful nursing and the generous food, that his brain was restored to its balance. And it was in the hospital, also, that Mary Lys had told him of the strange and supernatural occurrence that had saved his life.

"Nurse," he had said to her, "I know nothing of what you tell me. I was mad—quite unconscious of what I did. But I have always known that there was something about my dear friend that tells me that he is not as other men are. He is a man set apart, though for what end I do not know, and cannot foresee.

But one thing I plainly know and recognize—the Almighty Father chose Joseph to be the medium by which I was saved. God moves in a mysterious way, but he has destined my friend for wonderful things."

Mary Lys had agreed with her patient.

"I also have a prescience," she had said, "that Joseph has a work to do for God. He does not know it. He cannot realize it. He has made no submission to the Divine Will, but nevertheless he will be an instrument of It. I know with a strange certainty that this is his high destiny."

The rapid and vivid remembrance of all this went through Hampson's brain as a bullet goes through a board, when he heard Joseph's last words.

He caught him by the hand, holding the long, wasted fingers in his own, chafing them to bring back some living warmth into their icy coldness.

The strange voice ceased finally, and Joseph closed his eyes. The rigid tension of his face relaxed, and a little colour came back into it.

Then he gave a long sigh, shuddered and once more opened his eyes.

"I feel unwell," he said, in faint and hesitating tones. "I saw our dear, kind nurse in a carriage with another lady. We were all stopped by a block in the traffic, weren't we? I saw Nurse Mary, and then I can remember nothing more. I have been in a faint. I did not know I was still so weak."

"Don't you remember anything, then, Joseph?"

"Nothing at all. But I feel exactly as I felt when I was lying in hospital, and suddenly fainted there. It was the time when I said those extraordinary words to nurse, and she went and found you, poor old chap, just in the nick of time."

Hampson quivered with excitement.

"Then you felt just the same sensation a few minutes ago as you did when you were inspired to save my life by some mysterious influence?"

"Exactly the same. It is a weird feeling. It is as though suddenly my whole mind and body are filled with a great wind. I seem to lose my personality entirely, and to be under the dominion of an enormous overwhelming power and force. Then everything goes away like a stone falling through water, and I remember nothing until I regain consciousness."

Hampson took his friend's hand.

"Joseph," he said, in tones that were strangely moved and stirred, "have you yourself no explanation? How do you account for the fact that you told Nurse Mary to go and save my life?"

"I suppose it was owing to some sort of telepathy. The mind, so I believe, gives off waves of electricity exactly like the instrument which sends the wireless telegraph messages. You know that if a receiver in Marconi's system is tuned exactly to the pitch of a transmitter it picks up the messages automatically, even if they are not intended for it in the first instance. Some thought wave from your sub-conscious brain must have reached mine when you were preparing to hang yourself. That is the only explanation possible."

"No, Joseph," Hampson answered. "It is not the only explanation. There is another, and if you could know the words that you spoke in your trance but a few moments ago, you would think as I do."

"Did I speak? What did I say?"

"I think I will not tell you yet. Some day I will tell you. But I am certain that every act of yours,

every word you say, and every step you take, are under special and marvellous guidance. The Holy Spirit is guiding and leading you."

Joseph made a slight movement with his hand. There was something almost petulant in the gesture.

"Let us not talk of that," he said. "I think we are agreed not to speak of it. Certainly I will own that some curious things have happened. That there is a destiny that shapes our ends may possibly be true. But that any man does know anything of the nature and qualities of that destiny I am unable to believe. You and that dear, sweet Nurse Mary have put your own interpretation on the strange events of the last few weeks. Certainly I seem to be the sport of some dominating influence. I admit it, my friend. But it is coincidence, and nothing more. In my weaker moments I have something of this sense; in my stronger ones I know that it cannot be so."

"Well, Joseph, we shall see what the future has in store. For my part I am certain it is big with events for you."

"I shall owe everything to Nurse Mary," Joseph answered, changing the conversation. "It was extraordinarily kind of her to write to her brother, and ask him to have me as his guest until I recover! Such charity is rare in life. I have not often met with it, at any rate, on my way through the world."

"She is a saint," Hampson answered, with deep reverence in his voice.

"She is something very like it," Joseph answered. "Some day I hope to repay her. This long stay in the beautiful Welsh hills will give me the necessary strength and quietness of nerve to get to work again."

The brother, I understand, is a sort of mystic. He lives a hermit's life, and is a sort of mountain prophet. It is a strange thing, Hampson, that I should be going as a pauper to stay with the brother of a dear girl who took pity on my misfortunes! They have given me the money for my journey. When I am well again I shall be given the money to return to London, I, who am a graduate of Cambridge, and I may say it without ostentation, a mathematician of repute, depend for my present sustenance upon the charity of strangers. Yet I don't feel in the least embarrassed. That is more curious than anything else. I have a sense that my troubles are over now, that I shall come into my own again. We are nearly at the station, are we not?"

Hampson made some ordinary remark of assent. He knew the history of the almost incredible circumstances which had led to this journey of Joseph to Wales. He had seen the letter from Lluellyn Lys which bade Mary to send the man Joseph to him.

But Joseph did not know.

The patient had been told nothing of the mysterious circumstances that had brought about this plan of his journey. Joseph simply thought that he was invited to stay with Mary's brother, so that he might get well and strong and recover power to enter the battle of life once more. But Hampson was quite certain that before many days had passed his friend would realize not only the truth about his mysterious summons, but also the eternal truths of the Divine forces which were animating his unconscious will and bringing him nearer and nearer to the consummation of a Will which was not of this world, and of which he was the instrument.

The cab was rolling through the wide squares and streets of Bloomsbury. In three or four minutes it would arrive at Euston.

"You will soon be in splendid health, old fellow," Hampson said, anxious to turn the conversation into an ordinary and conventional channel. "Meanwhile, I'll have a cigarette. You mustn't smoke, of course, but you won't grudge me the single comfort that my poor health allows me?"

He felt in his pocket for the packet of cigarettes that he had bought that morning. Then, quite suddenly, he paused.

A sense of the tremendous incongruity of the present situation came to him.

He was riding in a London cab to a London station. He was going to see a sick friend start in a modern train for healing airs and a quiet sojourn among the hills.

And yet—and yet he firmly believed—almost knew, indeed—that this friend, this man who was called Joseph, was, so to speak, under the especial convoy of the Holy Ghost!

It was incredible! Were there indeed miracles going on each day in the heart of modern London? Was the world the same, even now, as it was in the old, dim days when Jesus the Lord walked among the valleys and the hills of Palestine?

Euston and cabs, and yet the modern world was full of mystery, of wonder. Yes, indeed, God ruled now as He had always ruled.

Joseph was going towards some divinely-appointed goal! He had been told nothing of the vision which had made Lluellyn Lys, the recluse of Wales, write to Mary, commanding her to send him to his mountains. He was moving blindly to meet his destiny.

Yet soon Joseph also would know what his friends knew. And with that knowledge——

Hampson's thoughts had passed through his brain in a single instant, while he was feeling for the cigarettes. He withdrew his hand mechanically from his pocket and found that it grasped a letter—a letter which had not been opened.

"Hullo," he said, "I have quite forgotten about my letter! It came by the afternoon post, just as I was leaving my room to go to the hospital and meet you. I put it in my pocket, and then thought no more about it."

He began to open the type-written envelope.

Joseph said nothing, but gazed out upon the panorama of the London streets with dreamy eyes. He was thinking deeply.

Suddenly he was startled by an exclamation from Hampson.

Turning, he saw that the little man's face was alive with excitement and flushed with pleasure.

"What is it, my dear fellow?" he asked.

"The most wonderful thing, Joseph! Fortune and prosperity at last! The big newspaper firm of Rees—Sir David Rees is the head of it—have offered me the editorship of their religious weekly, *The Sunday Friend*. I have written a dozen articles or so for them from time to time, and I suppose this is the result! I am to go and see Mr. Marston, the managing editor, to-morrow."

The words tumbled breathlessly from his lips—he could hardly articulate them in his enthusiasm and excitement. Joseph pressed his friend's hand. He knew well what this opportunity meant to the conscientious and hard-working little journalist, who had never had a chance before.

It meant freedom from the terrible and nerve-destroying hunt for food—the horrible living from meal to meal—the life of an animal in this regard, at least, but without the animal's faculties for satisfying its hunger. It meant that Hampson's real talent would now be expressed in its fullest power.

"I cannot congratulate you enough, dear friend," he said in a voice which trembled with emotion. "Of all men, you deserve it. I cannot say how happy this makes me, my friend, my brother—for it is as brothers that you and I have lived this long while. I always knew your chance would come. In the long run it always comes to those who are worthy of it. To some it comes early, to others late, but it always comes."

"It means everything to me, Joseph," Hampson answered. "And think what it will mean to you also! When you return cured and robust from Wales, I shall be able to give you regular employment. You will be able to write any amount of articles for me. It means safety and a new start for us both."

For some curious reason Joseph did not immediately reply.

Then he spoke slowly, just as the cab rolled under the massive archway, which guards the station courtyard.

"Thank you, indeed!" he answered. "But when you spoke, I had a sort of presentiment that I should never need your aid. I can't account for it, but it was strong and sudden."

"Oh, don't say that, old fellow! You must not be morbid, you know. You will outlive most of us, without a doubt."

"I did not mean that I felt that I should di

Hampson. Rather a sensation came to me that I was about to enter some new and strange life, which——"

The cab stopped.

"You and the porter must help me down," Joseph said, with a faint, musing smile of singular sweetness and—so Hampson thought—of inward anticipation and hope.

There was yet half an hour before the train was to start. It had been thought better that Joseph should make a night journey to Wales. The weather was very hot, and he would have more chance of rest.

"I'll take you to the waiting-room," Hampson said, "and then I will go and get your ticket and some papers. I have told the porter who has your bag what train you are going by. And the guard will come and see if you want anything."

Joseph waited in the dingy, empty room, while Hampson went away.

It was the ordinary bare, uncomfortable place with the hard leather seats, the coloured advertisements of seaside resorts, and the long, heavy table shining with hideous yellow varnish.

Hampson seemed a long time, Joseph thought, though when he looked up at the clock over the mantelshelf he saw that the journalist had only been gone about four minutes.

The waiting-room was absolutely silent, save for the droning of a huge blue fly that was circling round and round in the long beam of dusty sunlight which poured in from one window.

The noise of the station outside seemed far away—a drowsy diapason.

Joseph, soothed by the distant murmur, leant back in his chair and emptied his mind of thought.

Then his eye fell idly and carelessly upon an open book that lay upon the table.

The book was a copy of the Holy Bible, one of those large print books which a pious society presents to places of temporary sojourn, if perchance some passing may fall upon the Word of God and find comfort therein.

From where he sat, however, Joseph could not see what the book was.

Nevertheless, for some strange reason or other, it began to fascinate him. He stared at it fixedly, as a patient stares at a disc of metal given him by the trained hypnotist of a French hospital when a trance is to be induced.

Something within began to urge him to rise from his seat, cross the room, and see exactly what it was that lay there. The prompting grew stronger and stronger, until it filled his brain with an intensity of compulsion such as he had never known before.

He resented the extraordinary influence bitterly. A mad, unreasoning anger welled up within him.

"I will not go!" he said aloud. "Nothing in the world shall make me go!"

All that an ordinary spectator—had there been one in the waiting-room—would have seen was a pale-faced man staring at the table.

Yet, nevertheless, a wild battle was going on, almost frightful in its strength and power, though the end of it came simply enough.

The man could bear the fierce striving against this unknown and mysterious compulsion no longer. His will suddenly dissolved, melted away, fell to pieces like a child's house of cards, and with a deep sigh that was almost a groan, he rose and moved unsteadily towards the table.

He looked down at the book.

At first there was a mist before his eyes ; then it rolled up like a curtain, and these words sprang out clear and vividly distinct from the printed page :
" But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy."

CHAPTER IV

ON THE MOUNTAIN

THE long journey was over. A company of grave-faced men had met Joseph at a little wayside station. On one side stretched the sea, on the other great mountains towered up into the still, morning air.

It was early dawn. The sun in its first glory sent floods of joyous light over the placid waters. How splendid the air was—this ozone-laden breeze of the ocean—how cool, invigorating, and sweet!

Joseph turned to a tall, white-haired old man who seemed to be the leader of the band of people who stood upon the platform.

"I have come to a new world," he said simply.

"Blessed be the name of the Lord who has sent you to Wales," came the answer in deep and fervent tones.

Joseph looked at the man and his companions with astonishment. Why had Lluellyn Lys, the mysterious recluse and hermit of the mountains, sent these people to meet him? Why was there such a look of respect, almost of awe, upon the face of each man there, such eagerness and anticipation? It was all incomprehensible, utterly strange. He felt at a loss what to do or say.

He bowed, and then, as if in a dream, mingled with the group and passed out of the station. A carriage with two horses was waiting. By the side of it stood

the station-master ; the man's peaked cap was in his hand, and his face was lit up with welcome.

"The Teacher is waiting for you, sir," he said.

In a state of mind which was almost hypnotic Joseph was helped into the carriage. Three of the people who had come to meet him entered also, and they started up along a white mountain-road. Joseph felt that this progress was all too slow. He was going to a definite goal ; he had come this vast distance to meet some one, and he was impatient of delay.

He looked up. High above his head the great slate mountain towered into the sky, a white cap of cloud hid the summit.

The prospect was august, and it thrilled him strangely. In that great cloud—like the cloud upon Sinai—what might lie hid ? He was conscious of strange unseen forces, whose depths, measures, or intensity he could not understand, round him and controlling him. His life was utterly changed. The hard wall of materialism against which he had leant his sick life for support was melting and dissolving.

He gazed upwards once more at the great mountain.

Lluellyn Lys, the mysterious teacher, was there ! Who and what was this man of the mountains, this teacher who was so revered ? Mary's brother, the brother of the beautiful girl who had saved him and sent him to these wild solitudes of Wales.

Mary's brother, yes ; but what besides ? and what was Lluellyn Lys to be to him ?

* * * * *

They came to a point at which the road ended and died away into a mere grass track.

The old man who sat by Joseph's side rose from his seat and left the carriage.

"Master," he said, and, as he said it, Joseph bowed his head and could not look at him. "Master, here the road ends, and we must take you up the mountain-side to the Teacher by a steep path."

Another deep Celtic voice broke in upon the old man's speech.

"Ay, it is a steep path to the Teacher, Lluellyn is ever near to Heaven!"

Joseph had never heard Welsh before. He did not know a single word of that old tongue which all our ancestors of Britain used before ever St. Augustine came to England's shores with the news and message of Christ's death and passion.

Yet, at that moment Joseph *understood exactly what the man said*. The extraordinary fact did not strike him at the time, it was long afterwards that he remembered it as one of the least of the wondrous things that had befallen him.

He answered at once without a moment's pause.

"Lead on," he said; "I am with you. Take me to Lluellyn, the Teacher!"

Joseph turned. He saw that by the wayside there was a rough arm-chair hung between two long poles. Still moving as a man in a dream, he sat down on it. In a moment he was lifted up on the shoulders of four men, and began to ascend a narrow, winding path among the heather.

On and up! On and up!

Now they have passed out of ordinary ways, and are high upon the trackless hills. A dead silence surrounds them; the air is keen and life-giving; the workaday world seems very far away.

On and up! Joseph is carried to his fate. Suddenly the old man who walked in front stopped.

"Blessed be him who cometh in the name of the Lord!" he cried, in a deep, musical voice that woke thunderous echoes in the lonely way.

For near upon an hour the strange procession continued among the heather and bracken, through wild defiles and passes. At last, with singular and startling suddenness, the party entered the huge mass of fleecy cloud that veiled the mountain-top. All around was thick, impenetrable mist. Everything was blotted out by the thick curtain, the footsteps of the chair-bearers sounded like footsteps upon wool.

Then, without any other intimation than a few low words from the leader of the party, the journey came to an end, the chair was carefully lowered to the ground, and Joseph alighted.

A huge granite boulder stood close by. He sat down upon it, wondering with eager curiosity what was to happen next, looking round him with keen, searching eyes in a vain endeavour to pierce the ghostly, swaying walls of mist which hemmed him in on every side.

The old man stepped up to him.

"Master," he said again, "our business is at an end. We have brought you to the place where we have been told to bring you, and must say farewell until we meet again."

Joseph started.

"I do not understand," he said, in a voice into which something almost like fear had come. . . .

"I do not understand. Do you mean to leave me here alone? I am a sick man. I know nothing of where I am. Where is Lluellyn Lys?"

His voice sounded strained and almost shrill in its discomfort and surprise.

If the old man appreciated the intonation in the voice of his questioner he did not show it.

"Have no fear, Master," he said. "What I do, I do by command of the Teacher. No harm will come to you."

Joseph suddenly seemed to wake from his dream. A great sense of irritation, almost of anger, began to animate him. He was once more the old Joseph—the man who had walked with Hampson in the Commercial Road before the accident had struck him down.

"That's all very well," he said sharply. "Perhaps no harm will happen to me, but will Mr. Lluellyn Lys come to me? That is the question in which I am particularly interested at this moment. I don't know in the least where I am! I am too feeble to walk more than a few yards. I can't stay here alone until——"

He found that he was speaking to the air, the white and lonely mist. Suddenly, without a word of answer, his strange conductors had melted away—withdrawn and vanished.

He was alone on a mountain-top in Wales, surrounded by an impenetrable curtain of mist, unable to move in any direction. What was all this?

Was he the victim of some colossal trick, some cruel hoax, some immense and indefensible practical joke?

It was difficult to believe it, and yet he cursed his folly in accepting this strange invitation to Wales. What a foolish and unconsidered business it all seemed—now that he sat alone in the white stillness, the terrible solitude.

Still, mad as the action seemed to him now, he remembered that it was the result of a long chain of coincidences. Certainly—yes, of that there could be

no doubt—he seemed to have been led to this place. Something stronger than himself had influenced him. No, he was not here by chance——

Had he fallen asleep?

Still he sat upon the lichen-covered boulder, still the grey curtain of the mist hid all the mountain world.

Yet what was that sound—that deep, ringing voice which sounded in his ears, falling from some distant height, falling through the air like an arrow?

A voice! A voice! And these were the words it chanted—

“Rise up, Joseph, and come to me! Fear not, for God is with you! Come to me, that the things that are appointed may be done!”

The great voice rolled through the mist like a cathedral bell.

Cold and trembling, Joseph rose to his feet. One hand rested against the granite rock to support him as he answered, in a loud cry of terror—

“Who are you? What is this? Are you the man Lluelyn? I cannot come. I know not where to come. I am too weak to move. I am frightened.”

Again the organ voice came pealing through the gloom.

“Joseph, Joseph, rise up and come! Come and fear not, for the power of the Holy Ghost broods upon the mountains.”

Joseph stood for a moment trembling, and swaying from side to side. Then he was conscious of the most extraordinary sensation of his life.

Through the mist, invisible, impalpable, a great current of FORCE seemed flowing to him and around him.

It poured into every fibre of his being, body, mind,

and soul alike. It was not a delusion. It was wonderfully, marvellously real. Each second he grew stronger, power returned to his tired limbs, the weariness left his brain. He called out aloud—

"Teacher, I am coming to you?" And, with the swinging, easy step of a man in perfect health, together with the ease and certainty of a practised mountaineer, he began to climb upward through the mist.

It was as though he was floating on air, buoyant as a bird is. On and on he went, and all the while the invisible electric force poured into him and gave him strength and power.

Suddenly thin yellow beams of sunshine began to penetrate and irradiate the thick white blanket of mist. Stronger and stronger they grew, throwing a thousand prismatic colours on the thinning vapour, until at last Joseph emerged into full and glorious day.

This is what he saw,

The actual top of the mountain was only two or three yards above him, and formed a little rock-strewn plateau some twenty or thirty yards square—now bathed in vivid sunshine.

Against a cairn of boulders in the exact centre of the space a tall man was standing.

Both his arms were stretched out rigidly towards Joseph, the *fingers of each hand outspread and pointing to him*, as he emerged from the fog-belt with the sunshine. The man, who wore a long black cloak, was well over six feet high, and very thin. His face was pale, but the strong, rugged features gave it an impression of immense vitality and force.

Joseph stopped in sudden amazement at the sight of this strange figure up in the clouds. He suddenly

remembered a picture he had seen showing Dante standing upon a great crag, and looking down into the abyss of the Inferno.

Lluellyn Lys looked like that—exactly like that, Joseph thought.

He went straight up to the Teacher. As he did so, Lluellyn's arms suddenly collapsed and fell loosely to his sides. His eyes, which had been fixed steadily upon Joseph, closed with a simultaneous movement, and he leant back against the cairn as if utterly exhausted.

But this was only for a moment. As Joseph came up to him he roused himself, and his face lit up with welcome. The Teacher's smile was singularly winning and sweet—it was just like Mary's smile, Joseph thought—but it was also a very sad smile.

"Brother," Lluellyn said, "the peace of God be with you. May you be full of the Holy Ghost, that you may better accomplish those high things for which the Father has destined you, and for which He has brought you here."

Joseph took Lluellyn's hand, and was about to answer him when the former sank back once more against the boulders. His face grew white as linen, and he seemed about to swoon.

"You are ill!" Joseph cried in alarm. "What can I do to help you?"

"It is nothing," Lluellyn answered in a moment or two. "I have been giving you of my strength, Joseph, that you might mount the last stage of your journey. The voice of the Lord came to me as I communed here with Him, and the Holy Spirit sent the power to you through this unworthy body of mine."

Joseph bowed.

"I am moving in deep waters," he said. "Many strange and wonderful things have happened to me of late. My mind is shaken, and my old life with its old point of view already seems very far away. But let me say, first, how much I appreciate your extreme kindness in asking me here, through Miss Lys. As Miss Mary will have told you, I am a poor, battered scholar with few friends, and often hard put to live at all. Your kindness will enable me to recover after my accident."

Lluellyn took Joseph by the arm.

He led him to the edge of the plateau.

"Look!" he said.

The mist had gone. From that great height they looked down the steep, pine-clothed sides of the mountain to the little white village, far, far below. Beyond was the shining, illimitable ocean.

"The world is very fair," Joseph said.

"The world is very fair because God is immanent in all things. God in the sea, and on the sides of the hills. The Holy Ghost broods over those distant waters, and is with us here in this high place. Joseph, from the moment when the cross-wise timbers struck you down in Whitechapel, until this very moment now, you have been led here under the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost. There is a certain work for you to do."

Joseph looked at the tall man with the grave, sweet smile in startled astonishment.

"What do I bring?" he said. "I, the poor, battered wreck, the unknown, the downtrodden? What do I bring *you*?"

Lluellyn looked Joseph in the face, and placed one long, lean hand upon his shoulder.

"Ask rather what you bring God," he said. "It were a more profitable question. For me, in the power and guidance of the Lord, it is ordained that you bring one thing only."

"And what is that?"

"Death!" said Lluellyn Lys.

CHAPTER V

THE POURING

LUELLYN LYS lived in a cottage on the side of the mountain where Joseph had first been taken to meet him. His small income was enough for his almost incredibly simple wants, and an ancient widow woman who loved and revered him more than anything else in the world kept the cottage for him, milked the cow, and did such frugal cooking as was necessary.

Lluellyn was known far and wide in that part of Wales. The miners, the small crofting farmers, and the scattered shepherds revered and honoured the mysterious "Teacher" as men of God were revered in the old times.

His influence was very great in the surrounding mining villages; he had been able to do what sometimes even the parish priests had tried in vain. The drunkard, the man of a foul and blasphemous tongue, loose-livers and gamblers, had become sober and God-fearing folk, with their hearts set upon the Eternal Light.

No one knew when the tall ascetic figure would appear among them with a strange appropriateness. It was said that he possessed the gift of second sight, and many extraordinary stories were told of him.

His sermons were wonderful in their directness and force, their strange magnetic power. He had a mysteri-

ous knowledge of men's hearts, and would often make a personal appeal to some sinner who had stayed to hear him—an appeal full of such accurate and intimate knowledge of his listener's inner life and secret actions that it appeared miraculous.

And in addition to this power of divination, it was whispered that the Teacher possessed the power of healing, that his touch had raised the sick from couches of pain. It was certain that several people who had been regarded as at death's door had recovered with singular rapidity after Lluellyn had paid them one or two visits. But in every case the folk who had got well refused to speak of their experiences, though it was remarked that their devotion to the recluse became almost passionate.

A continual mystery enveloped him. Sometimes no one saw him for weeks. He would spend day after day locked up in the room he used in the cottage, and people who had climbed the mountain to seek him, were told by the housekeeper that it was impossible, and that she herself had not looked upon his face for many days.

Occasionally some late returning shepherd or miner would see the tall, dark figure kneeling, lost in prayer, on the summit of some cloudy peak, or the edge of some terrible abyss—stark and sharply outlined in the moonlight.

And then again would come those sudden periods of mighty activity, of great gatherings on the hillside, fiery words of warning and exhortation in the villages.

* * * * *

Joseph had been with Lluellyn Lys for ten days. After the first strange meeting on the mountain, when the Teacher had uttered the enigmatic word "Death!"

he had refused to give his newly arrived guest any explanation of his saying.

"Brother," he said, "ask me not anything of the meaning of these things. The time when they shall be revealed is not yet come, neither do I myself see clearly in what manner they shall be accomplished."

Lluellyn had prayed.

"You are faint with the long journey, Joseph," he said, "but my house is not far way, where you will find food and rest. But first let us pray for a blessing upon your arrival, and that all things may befall as Our Lord would have them."

And there, in the glorious noontide sunshine, on the highest point of that great mountain from which they could survey the distant, shining sea, and range beyond range of mighty hills, the two men knelt down and prayed.

Joseph knelt with folded hands by the side of the Teacher.

It did not seem strange to him that he should do this. He no longer knew the fierce revolt of the intellect against the promptings of the conscience and the soul.

Rebellion had ceased. He bowed his head in prayer.

"Oh, Holy Ghost, descend upon us now, upon two sinful men, and fill us with Thyself. Fill and permeate us with Thy divine power. Send down Thy blessing upon us, and especially guard and influence Joseph that those things which Thou hast designed for him be not too heavy for him.

"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Three in One, and One in Three—Amen."

Then had come a ten minutes' descent, by an easier path on the other side of the principal cone, till the house of the Teacher was reached.

Joseph, after a simple meal, had fallen asleep. He was wearied to death, and when the housekeeper told him that he had slept for a whole revolution of the clock hands his surprise was great.

For the first two or three days of his stay Joseph saw but little of his host. They met at the frugal midday and evening repasts, but that was all. Even then Lluellyn talked but little, though his manner was always kind and almost deferential.

The Teacher, so his guest could not avoid thinking, regarded him from some standpoint which he could not enter into. Lluellyn spoke to, and regarded Joseph as if he were a man set apart, for some reason or other.

It was very mysterious and piqued the convalescent's curiosity, sometimes to an almost unbearable degree. There were constant veiled references to the future, hints of a time to come—of some imminent happening of tremendous importance.

What was to happen? How was he concerned in these matters? This was the question that Joseph constantly asked himself with growing impatience and nervous anticipation.

After the first three days Joseph saw more of his host. They went for walks together over the hills, and once or twice the guest was present at a great gathering on the mountain-side, when Lluellyn preached to the people, and swayed them as the wind sways a field of corn.

More and more Joseph began to realize the holiness of this man with whom he lived. His love for God and for men glowed within him like a white flame. Joseph no longer said or believed that there was no God. His experiences had been too wonderful for that. It was impossible for any sane mind to be

with Lluellyn Lys daily and not to recognize that some influence which was supernormal both in essence and fact made him what he was.

But Christ? Ah, that was a different matter! As yet the Man of Sorrows had touched no responsive chord in Joseph's heart.

It was, then, under these conditions, and while his mental development was just at this point, that the finger of God moved at last, and the stupendous drama of Joseph's life began.

He had been alone all day, and as evening fell went out to see if he could find Lluellyn. There was a sense of loneliness upon him. For some reason or other he felt forsaken and forlorn. After all, life was empty, and held very little for him.

Such were his thoughts as he walked along a familiar path towards an ancient Druid circle, some half a mile from the cottage, where he thought he might find his host.

A faint watery moonlight illuminated the path among the heather, a wan and spectral radiance, which gave the mountain-pass a strange, unearthly aspect.

And as Joseph walked there, with a heavy heart, he became aware that some one was coming towards him. It was not Lluellyn Lys. Of that he was certain, an instinct told him so.

The figure came rapidly and noiselessly over the heath, and as it came Joseph began to tremble. His knees knocked together, his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, the palms of his hands were wet.

Yet, as far as we may judge, it was not unmixed fear that Joseph felt. Never, at any time, did he describe his sensations at that supreme moment.

When questioned afterwards he was always silent. But it was not all fear.

The figure drew nearer until at last it stood in the centre of the path, closing the way to the wanderer.

The dark moors, the faint and spectral sky, the whole visible world flashed away. There was a noise in Joseph's ears as of many waters, and through the great rush that was overwhelming him, body, mind, and soul, he seemed to hear a voice speaking——

Then a thick darkness blotted out all sensation, and he knew no more.

* * * * *

Joseph tried to lift his arm. He was conscious of the desire to do so, but for some reason or other he was unable to move it for a moment.

The arm felt like lead.

Slowly—and this also was with an effort—he opened his eyes.

He was in bed, lying in the familiar room at Lluellyn's cottage, though how he had come there he had no idea whatever.

His eyes wandered vaguely round the place, and as they grew accustomed to conscious use he saw that some changes had been made in the aspect of the room. A table had been removed, and a larger one substituted for it. The new table was covered with bottles—square bottles with white labels pasted on them. And there was a faint medicinal smell in the air also. Then, a sofa-couch had made its appearance which had not been there before. What did it all mean?

Suddenly the memory of the figure that had walked towards him upon the moor when all was late and dark came back to him in a rush of sensation. Why had everything flashed away as that silent figure approached? Who or what was it that had come noiselessly upon him through the gloom. Why had he been struck down?

Struck down? Yes; that was what had happened. He began to think a little more clearly. He had been struck down, and now, of course, he was ill. They had found him on the moor probably, and brought him back to the cottage.

He began to realize more and more that he was ill—very ill. He tried to turn in bed, and could hardly do so. Once more he endeavoured to lift the arm that felt like a limb of lead, and, partially succeeding, he saw that it was thin and wasted.

There was a chair standing not far away from the bed, and on it a copy of a religious journal. He started. His eye had fallen upon the date of the paper.

Slowly and painfully he recalled the date of his first arrival in Wales—the expiration of time since his sojourn with the Teacher began until the date indicated upon the front page of the journal.

There could be no doubt about it, he had been lying unconscious of the outside world, and heedless of the passage of time, for at least eight days—possibly even more.

He gave a little gasp of astonishment—a gasp which was almost a moan—and as he did so the door of the bed-room opened, and Mrs. Price, the old housekeeper, entered.

She came straight up to the bedside and looked down upon Joseph. There was something very strange in the expression of the old, wrinkled face. It was changed from its usual expression of resigned and quiet joy. There were red circles round the eyes, as if she had been weeping; the kind old mouth was drawn with pain.

“Ah, my dear,” she said to Joseph, “you’ve come to yourself at last! It was what the doctor said—

that it would be about this time that you would come to. The Lord be praised ! ”

Joseph tried to answer her. The words came slowly from his lips. He articulated with difficulty, and his voice was strange to his own ears.

“ Have I been ill long ? ”

“ For near ten days, sir, you have lain at death’s door. The doctor from Penmaenbach said that you would surely die. But the Teacher knew that you would not. And oh, and oh, woe’s the day when you came here ! ”

With a sudden convulsive movement, the old lady threw her hands up into the air, and then burst into a passion of weeping.

Joseph had heard her with a languid interest. His question was answered ; he knew now exactly what had happened, but he was still too weak and weary for anything to have much effect upon him. Yet the sudden tears and the curious words of the kindly old dame troubled him.

“ I am sorry,” he said faintly. “ I know that I must have been a great trouble to you. But I had no idea I should fall ill again.”

For answer she stooped over and kissed him upon the forehead.

“ Trouble ! ” she cried, through her tears. “ That’s no word to say to me. I spoke hastily, and what I said I said wrongly. It was the Teacher that was in my mind. But it is all the will of the Lord to Whom all must bow—you’ll take your medicine now, if you please.”

So she ended, with a sudden descent from high matters to the practical occupations of the ministering angel.

Joseph drank the potion which the old lady held to his lips. Her arm was round his head as she raised it, her brown, tear-stained old face was close to his.

He felt a sudden rush of affection for her. In the past he had ever been a little cold in his relations with all men and women. Save, perhaps, for Hampson, the journalist, he had not experienced anything like love for his kind. Yet now he felt his heart going out to this dear old nurse, and, more than that even, something cold and hard within him seemed to have melted. He realized in his mind, as a man may realize a whole vast landscape in a sudden flash of lightning, how much love there was in the world after all.

Even as his whole weak frame was animated by this new and gracious discovery, the door of the bed-room opened once more and Lluellyn Lys came in.

Mrs. Price turned from the bed upon which Joseph was lying, and went up to the Teacher.

She caught him by the arm—Joseph was witness of it all—and bowed her head upon it. Then once more she began to sob.

"Oh, man, man," she said, "I've loved ye and tended ye for many years now. And my father, and my mother, and my people for a hundred years before, have served the house of Lys. But you have led me from the bondage of darkness and sin into peace and light. Ye brought me to the Lord Jesus; Lluellyn Lys. Aye and the Holy Ghost came down upon me when I gave my heart to the Lord! And now, 'tis near over, 'tis all near done, and my heart is bitter heavy, Lys. Master, my heart is bowed down with woe and grief!"

Lluellyn gently took the poor old thing by the arm. He led her to the bedside where Joseph lay.

"Old friend," he said—"dear old faithful friend and servant, it is not me whom you must call Master any more. My work is nearly done, the time of my departure draws near. Here is your Master."

The old dame, clinging to Lluellyn's arm, looked down at Joseph. Then she started violently, and began to tremble like an autumn leaf in the wind.

The old face, browned by a thousand days of mountain sun and storm, grew pale under its tan. She looked up into Lluellyn's eyes with an interrogation that was almost fierce in its intensity.

"I see something, Lys!" she said. "I see something! What does it mean—what is it, Master? I never saw it before!"

Lluellyn answered her gravely and slowly.

"I know not," he said, "save only that it is God's will. All has not yet been revealed to me. But I shall know soon, very soon, Anna, old friend. And, as you are a godly woman of the Lord, I charge you that you go with this man when he departs from this place. Leave us now, Anna. I have somewhat to do with Joseph."

As his voice fell and ceased, the old lady went weeping from the room.

For some little time there was a dead silence in the place.

Joseph's brain was in a whirl, but his eyes were fixed upon the tall figure of the teacher.

Lluellyn Lys was strangely altered. His thin form was thinner still. Always fragile in appearance, he now seemed as if a breath would blow him away. His face and hands were deathly white, and his whole appearance suggested a man almost bloodless, from whom all vitality had been literally drained.

"You are ill, Lluellyn," Joseph said at length.

The Teacher shook his head.

"No, dear friend," he answered. "I do what I have to do, that is all."

As he spoke, he drew a chair up to the bedside, and, stretching out his long, thin hands, placed the fingertips of one upon Joseph's forehead, and those of the other upon his pulse.

A dim memory, faint and misty, came to Joseph of his recent illness. Lluellyn had sat in this position before, the touch of his fingers was familiar somehow or other, the stooping form awoke a chord of memory.

"Why," he said, "since I have been ill you have been doing this many times. It is all coming back to me. What are you doing?"

Lluellyn smiled faintly.

"I am giving you strength for the work God intends you to do," he said. "Do not talk, Joseph. Lie very still, and fix your thoughts on God."

Already the Teacher's voice seemed thin and far away to Joseph. It was as though he was moving rapidly away from Lluellyn, carried by a strange force, a vital fluid which was pouring into his veins.

He experienced exactly the same sensation as when he had first climbed the mountain-top to meet Lluellyn—that of receiving power, of being a vessel into which life itself was flowing.

At some time or another most people have been under the influence of an anæsthetic, if only for the extraction of a tooth. Joseph now began to lose consciousness in exactly the same way, rapidly, with a sense of falling and a roaring noise in the ears.

The falling motion seemed to stop, the noise ceased, everything was dark.

Then the black swayed like a curtain. Light came swiftly and silently, and in one single moment Joseph saw stretched before him and below him a vast panorama.

It was London that he saw, but in a way that no human eye has ever beheld the modern Babylon. Nor does the word "saw" accurately express the nature of the vision.

He apprehended rather than saw. The inner spiritual eye conveyed its message to the brain far more clearly and swiftly than even the delicate lenses and tissues of the flesh can ever do. Colour, form, movement, all these were not seen physically, but felt in the soul.

He had passed out of the dimensions of mortal things into another state.

London lay below him, and in the spirit he heard the noise of its abominations, and saw the reek of its sin hanging over it like a vast, lurid cloud.

They say, and the fact is well authenticated, that a drowning man sees the whole of his past life, clear, distinct, minutely detailed, in a second of time.

It was with some such flash as this that Joseph saw London. He did not see a picture or a landscape of it. He did not receive an impression of it. He saw it *whole*. He seemed to know the thoughts of every human heart, nothing was secret from him.

His heart was filled with a terrible anguish, a sorrow so profound and deep, so piercing and poignant, that it was even as death—as bitter as death. He cried out aloud, "Lord Jesus, purge this city, and save the people. Forgive them, O Lord, out of Thy bountiful goodness and mercy! I that am as dust and ashes have taken it upon me to speak to the Lord. O Lord,

purge this city of its abominations, and save this Thy servant. Teach me to love Thee and to labour for Thee ! ”

The vision changed. Into Joseph's heart there came an ineffable glow of reverence and love. In its mighty power it was supersensual, an ecstasy for which which there are no words, a love in which self passed trembling away like a chord of music, a supreme awe and adoration.

For he thought that a face was looking upon him, a face full of the Divine love, the face of Our Lord.

A voice spoke in his heart—or was it an actual physical voice ?—

“ Lo, this has touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? Then said I, Here am I ; send me.”

A silence, a darkness of soul and mind, the rushing of many waters, falling, falling, falling. . . .

Joseph awoke, the voice rang in his ears still.

He saw the walls of the cottage room ; he had come back to the world and to life ; a terrible, overmastering fear and awe shook him like a reed.

He cried out with a loud voice, calling for his friend, calling for the Teacher.

“ Lluellyn ! Lluellyn Lys, come to me ! ”

He was lying upon his back still, in exactly the same position as that in which he had lost consciousness while Lluellyn's hands were upon him giving him life and strength.

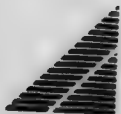
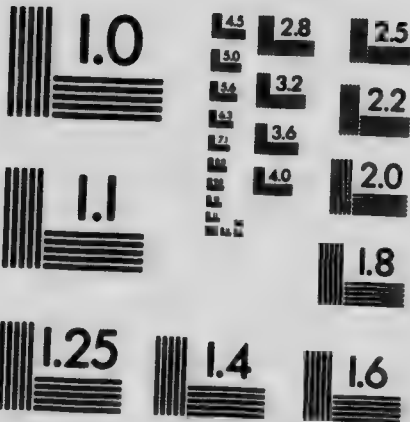
Now he sat up suddenly, without an effort, as a strong and healthy man moves.

“ Lluellyn ! Lluellyn ! ”



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His loud call for help was suddenly strangled into silence. Lying upon the floor, close to the bedside, was the body of Lluellyn Lys, a long white shell, from which the holy soul had fled to meet its Lord.

The Teacher had given his life for his friend. In obedience to some mysterious revelation he had received of the Divine Will, Lluellyn Lys had poured his life into the body of another.

Joseph stared for a moment at the corpse, and then glanced wildly round the room. He could call no more, speech had left him, his lips were shrivelled, his tongue paralysed.

As he did so, his whole body suddenly stiffened and remained motionless.

Exactly opposite to him, looking at him, he saw once more the face of his vision, the countenance of the Man of Sorrows.

In mute appeal, powerless to speak, he stretched out his arms in supplication.

But what was this?

Even as he moved, the figure moved also. Hands were stretched out towards him, even as his were extended.

He leapt from the bed, passed by the still, white body upon the floor—and learned the truth.

A large mirror hung upon the opposite wall.

What he had thought to be the face of Christ—the veritable face of his vision—was his own face!

His own face, bearded, changed, and moulded by his illness, altered entirely.

His own face had become as an image and simulacrum of the traditional pictures and representations of Our Lord's.

CHAPTER VI

THE CROSS AT ST. PAUL'S

HAMPSON had been in the editorial chair of the religious weekly for nearly a month, and the change in the little journalist's circumstances were enormous ; from the most grinding poverty, the most precarious existence, he had arrived at what to him was wealth.

He felt himself a rich man, and, indeed, the big firm of newspaper proprietors which had singled him out to occupy his present position was not niggardly in the matter of salary. With careful discrimination they sought out the best man for this or that post, and when they found him paid him sufficiently well to secure his continued adherence to their interests.

Hampson generally arrived at his office about eleven, and opened his letters. On the day of which this chapter treats he came earlier as he had to "pass the paper for press."

A large amount of correspondence awaited him, and he waded steadily through it for about an hour, giving directions to his secretary as each letter was opened. When the man had gone to his own room Hampson leant back in his comfortable chair with a sigh. His usually cheerful face wore an expression of perplexity and annoyance.

More than a fortnight had elapsed since he had received any communication from his friend Joseph.

When Joseph had first left London he had written every two or three days to Hampton—brilliant, if slightly caustic letters, describing his new environment and the life he was leading on the mountain with Lluellyn Lys. These letters had concealed nothing, and had told the journalist exactly what had occurred. Yet every time that the writer recorded some strange happening, or wrote of some unusual experience and sensation, he had given a *material* explanation of it at considerable length.

The astonishing climb up the final peak of the mountain, for example, was recorded with great accuracy. The voice of the Teacher as it pealed down through the mist, the sudden access of strength that made it possible for Joseph to join his host—all this, and much more, was set down with orderly and scientific precision. But the explanation had been that the tonic power of the mountain air had provided the muscular impetus necessary for the climb, and that its heady influence upon a mind unaccustomed to so much oxygen had engendered the delusion of a supernatural force.

Hampson had his own opinion about these strange things. He saw further into them than Joseph appeared to be able to see. Yet his friend's letters were a constant source of pleasure and inspiration to him—even while he deplored Joseph's evident resolve to admit nothing into his life that did not allow of a purely material explanation.

And now the letters had stopped.

He had heard no single word for days and days. His own communications had remained unanswered,

nor had he received any reply to an anxious inquiry after Joseph's health, addressed to Lluellyn Lys himself.

This morning, again, there was nothing at all, and the faithful little man was gravely disturbed. Something serious had indubitably happened, and how to find out what it was he did not know.

It was a day of thick and lurid fog. London lay under a pall—the whole world around was sombre and depressing.

The well-furnished editorial sanctum, with its electric lights, leather-covered armchairs, gleaming telephones, and huge writing-table was comfortable enough, but the leaden light outside, upon the Thames Embankment, made London seem a city of dreadful night.

Hampson rose from his chair, and stood at the window for a moment, lost in thought.

Yes, London was indeed a terrible city. More terrible than Babylon of old, more awful when one remembered that Christ had come to the world with His Message of Salvation.

The ancient city of palaces, in its eternal sunlit majesty, had never known the advent of the Redeemer. Yet, were those forgotten people who worshipped the God Merodach really worse than the Londoners of to-day?

Only on the day before, a West End clergyman had come to Hampson with detailed statistics of the vice in his own parish in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly. The vicar's statements were horrible. To some people they would have sounded incredible. Yet they were absolutely true, as Hampson was very well aware—naked, shameful horrors in Christian London.

"Ah," the clergyman said, "if only Our Lord came

to London now how awful would His condemnation be ! ”

As the editor looked out upon the gloom he felt that the material darkness was symbolic of a spiritual darkness which sometimes appalled him when he realized it.

The door opened, and the sub-editor came in with “ pulls ” of the final sheets of the paper. Hampson had to read these carefully, initial them, and send them to the composing-room marked as ready for the printing-machines. Then his work was done for the day.

At lunch time, the fog still continuing, he left the office. An idea had come to him which might be of service in obtaining news of Joseph.

He would take a cab down to the East End Hospital, and ask Mary Lys if she knew anything about his friend. Probably she would know something ; her brother, Lluellyn Lys, would almost certainly have written to her.

Hampson had met Mary two or three times during the last weeks. He revered the beautiful girl, who had saved him from the consequences of his sudden madness, with all the force of his nature.

In her he saw a simple and serene holiness, an absolute abnegation of self which was unique in his experience. She represented to him all that was finest, noblest, and best in Christian womanhood.

Since his appointment to the editorial chair he had gloried in the fact that he had been able to send her various sums of money for distribution among the most destitute of the patients under her charge.

At four o'clock he had an appointment with the clerk of the works at St. Paul's Cathedral, but until

then he was free. The *Sunday Friend* covered a very wide field, and hardly any question of interest to religious people was left untouched. At the moment grave fears were entertained as to the safety of the huge building upon Ludgate Hill. The continual burrowing for various purposes beneath the fabric had caused a slight subsidence of one of the great central piers. A minute crack had made its appearance in the dome itself.

Hampson had obtained permission from the dean to inspect the work of repair that was proceeding, knowing that his readers would be interested in the subject.

Until four, however, he was perfectly free, and he drove straight towards Whitechapel.

His cab drove slowly through the congested arteries of the City, where the black-coated business men scurried about like rats in the gloom. But in half an hour Hampson arrived at the door of the hospital, and was making inquiries if Nurse Lys was off duty or no, and that if she were would she see him.

He had not come at this time entirely on speculation. He knew that, as a general rule, Mary was free at this hour.

She proved to be so to-day, and in a moment or two came into the reception-room where he was waiting.

She was like a star in the gloom! he thought.

How beautiful her pure and noble face was, how gracious her walk and bearing! All that spiritual beauty which comes from a life lived with utter unselfishness for others, the holy tranquillity that goodness paints upon the face, the light God lends the eyes when His light burns within—all these, added to Mary's

THE ANGEL

remarkable physical beauty, marked her out as rare among women.

The little journalist worshipped her. She seemed to him a being so wonderful that there was a sort of desecration even in touching her hand.

"Ah, my friend," she said to him, with a flashing smile of welcome, "I am glad to see you. To tell you the truth, I have a melancholy mood to-day, a thing so very rare with me that it makes me all the more glad to see a friend's face. How are you, and how is your work?"

"I am very well, Nurse Mary, thank you, but I am troubled in mind about Joseph. I cannot get an answer to any of my letters, though at first he wrote constantly. I even wrote to Mr. Lluellyn Lys, hoping to hear from him that all was well. But I have received no answer to that letter either. I came to ask you if you had any news."

Mary looked at him strangely, and with perplexity in her eyes.

"No," she said. "I have had no news at all from either of them for some time. I have been distressed in mind about it for some days. Of course, I have written too, but there has been no response. That is why I have been feeling rather downhearted to-day. It is curious that you, Mr. Hampson, should have come to me with this question, and at this moment."

Both looked at each other apprehensively, and for this reason: they were not talking of two ordinary men and their doings.

They felt this strongly.

There had been too many unusual and inexplicable occurrences in connexion with Joseph's accident and arrival at the hospital for either Mary or Hampson to

disregard any seeming coincidence. Both knew, both had always felt, that they were spectators of—or, rather, actors in—a drama upon which the curtain had but lately risen.

"When did you last hear from Joseph?" Mary asked.

Hampson mentioned the date. It was, though, of course, he did not know it, the date of Joseph's strange experience upon the midnight moor, the date on which he had been struck down, and on which his second illness began.

"It was at that time that I received my last letter from my brother," the girl answered—"the exact day, in fact. The letter troubled me when it came; it has troubled me ever since. It spoke of the end of his work here, hinted that he felt he had almost done what he was sent into the world to do, though at the same time he bade me prepare myself for great events immediately imminent."

There was a silence in the big, bare reception room. Mary broke it.

"What a dreadful day it is, Mr. Hampson," she said, with an effort to give the conversation a less gloomy turn. "I have rarely seen the fog lie so low over town. Oh, for a breath of fresh air—just five short minutes of fresh, unclouded air! I think I would give almost anything for that at this moment."

A sudden thought came to the journalist.

"Do you know, nurse," he said, "I think I am one of the few men in London who can give you just what you ask at this moment; that is, if you don't mind doing something slightly unconventional?"

"Oh, convention!" she answered, with the serene smile of the high-natured woman for whom the word has no terrors.

Hampson explained where he was bound when he left the hospital, and for what purpose. There would be no difficulty in the matter at all, if Mary cared to accompany him to the roof of the cathedral. It was certain, also, that the dome would rise high above the low belt of fog which was stifling London.

Mary had three hours at her own disposal. In ten minutes they were driving to the great church.

When they had ascended to the roof of St. Paul's they found the fog was not so dense. The sun was setting over the modern Babylon.

Hampson pointed down at the nether gloom.

"Vanity Fair!" he said. "Vanity Fair! What would Jesus Christ say to London if He came to it now?"

As he spoke the breeze suddenly freshened, the fog clouds took new shapes, the light of the western sun grew in the dark.

And then a thing happened that set their hearts beating furiously.

Right ahead in the gloom, flashing, flame-like, clear-cut, and distinct, a mighty cross hung over London.

It was at precisely this moment that Joseph was staring, trembling, into the mirror, at the foot of which lay the long white body of Lluellyn Lys, and realizing his own exact resemblance to the Man of Sorrows, Jesus, Who came to save us all.

CHAPTER VII

THE FINANCIER

SIR AUGUSTUS KIRWAN, the great financier, was much disturbed by the news that his nephew Lluellyn Lys was dead. Both Sir Augustus and his wife had hoped that the recluse of the mountains might be induced to leave his solitudes and take an ordinary place in the world. The baronet was sonless. His wealth was enormous, and he could leave his daughter Marjorie enough money to make her one of the richest heiresses in England, and still endow a male heir with a huge fortune. This he would have done for his wife's nephew—his own nephew by marriage, for though not a well-born man himself, he had an immense reverence for ancient blood.

He revered it in his wife, and was as well informed in the history of the House of Lys as she was herself. Now, however, there was no longer any chance of reclaiming Lluellyn from what Sir Augustus and Lady Kirwan had always regarded as the most incredible folly and semi-madness.

The last male Lys in the direct line was gathered to his fathers. There still remained Mary Lys.

"My dear," the baronet said to his wife, "Lluellyn's death has been a great blow to you, and, indeed, it has to me also, for you know that I share your enthusi-

asm for your family and your hopes for it. But Mary is still with us. She is young and beautiful. We can give her a dowry that will attract a duke. As soon as I am well again I shall put my foot down in no uncertain way. This time, whatever Mary may say, I shall compel her to leave this ridiculous slum-hospital work and take her proper place in society."

Sir Augustus spoke of his illness. He was a man by no means indifferent to the pleasures of the table. As he himself would have expressed it, he "did himself well" in every particular.

But people who like white truffles from Piedmont, caviare from the Volga, comet year port, and liqueurs of brandy at seven pounds a bottle, must expect a Nemesis.

Two days before the news of Lluellyn's death arrived Sir Augustus was seized with a bad attack of gout.

When Mary Lys, in uncontrollable grief, had hastened to her aunt's house in Berkeley Square, carrying the sad message from Joseph Bethune which told her of her beloved brother's death, the banker had been quite unable to move.

Had it been in any way possible, the worthy man would have hastened to Wales to be present at the funeral of his nephew by marriage. But the physicians had absolutely forbidden him the journey. He would not, however, allow Mary to travel to the principality by herself. In the first place he had the not uncommon dislike of men to their womenkind attending funerals. Mary would not hear of this.

"Uncle," she said, "shall I not go to see my dear and saintly brother's body put into the earth from which he will rise again when the trumpet of the Resurrection Day sounds?"

This was rather above Sir Augustus.

"Tut, tut, my dear," he said; "the—er—Resurrection trumpet is not very near to the nineteenth century. But still, if you must go, I shall insist on your having a proper escort."

Accordingly Mary had been sent to Wales in the charge of the Kirwans' family solicitor, who was instructed to see that everything was done decently and in order, as befitted the obsequies of the last male member of the House of Lys.

For her part, Mary did not in the least want the company of Mr. Owen, the solicitor. She would have infinitely preferred to be left alone with her grief. Nevertheless she recognized the kindly feeling and family instinct that prompted Sir Augustus' action, and submitted with the best grace possible.

Lluellyn Lys had been dead for seven days, and it was now two days after the funeral.

Sir Augustus was not yet able to leave the house, but his gout was better. After the simple dinner—which was all that the doctor allowed him—he sat in his library reading the newspaper of that morning.

The first thing that caught his eye was a review of a new play which had just been produced under the title of "The Golden Maiden." Sir Augustus was an occasional patron of the burlesque stage. The sort of entertainments provided by the theatres that produce "musical comedy" were quite to his taste. Kindly and generous as he was, he was a man without any religious belief whatever and with no ideals. To such a mind, the indelicacy and lubricity of these plays appealed intensely, and afforded him great amusement. Nor had he the slightest idea that any blame whatever could attach to him. These places

were crowded night after night by all sections of society—who was he to stay away?

Sir Augustus chuckled over the criticism. The writer first gave a detailed synopsis of the plot—such as it was—and recorded his general impressions of the performance. The critic was obviously a man of taste and decent feeling, for he spoke in no measured terms of the gross indecency of the play, which was, to put it plainly, little more nor less than a glorification of adultery.

“And the pity of it is,” the writer concluded, “that all London will flock to see this immoral nonsense. If the drama is to be thus degraded—and no other form of entertainment has an equal popularity with the one under discussion—then decent English men and women will begin to long for the return of the Commonwealth, with its stern and self-sacrificing simplicity.”

Sir Augustus put the paper down.

“Silly fool,” he muttered. “I wonder he is allowed to write such hypocritical twaddle. Certainly, from what he says, they do seem to have gone a little too far this time.”

Nevertheless, Sir Augustus made a mental resolve to look in at the Frivolity for an hour or two as soon as ever his leg would let him.

He put down the paper and lit a cigar. All round him were the evidences of enormous wealth. The library was a large and beautiful room. A fire of cedar logs glowed in the open hearth, and threw flickering lights—rose-pink and amethyst—upon the gold and crimson books standing in their carved-oak shelves.

The parquet floor was almost hidden by priceless

rugs from Teheran—white, brick-dust colour, and peacock-blue. There was a marvellous *console* which had belonged to Marie Antoinette, a buhl clock which had stood in the palace of Sans Soucci, and was a gift to Frederick The Great from Voltaire. As Sir Augustus looked round he forgot "The Golden Maiden," and sighed. He was thinking of his dead nephew, Lluellyn Lys, and wishing that he had a son to succeed to all these splendours.

The door opened, and Lady Kirwan entered, tall, stately, and beautiful still, in her flowing black dinner-gown and the heavy ropes of pearls around the white column of her neck.

She sat down on the opposite side of the fire to her husband.

"My dear," she said, and there was distress in her voice, "I am so worried about Mary."

"About Mary?" Sir Augustus replied, with some little surprise. "Oh, you need not worry about Mary, Julia. Of course, this has been a great blow to her. But she is young and level-headed in many ways. Time will heal her wounds."

"Oh, it is not that, Augustus. Of course, the poor dear girl will get over her grief. Besides, she is religious, you know, and that certainly does seem to help certain natures. I have often observed it. But I am anxious about her now. Lluellyn was buried two days ago, and except Mr. Owen's telegram announcing the bare fact, we have not heard a word from either of them. Mary ought to be back here now."

"Well, my dear," the baronet replied, "I really don't think there is the slightest reason for anxiety. Mary is in perfectly safe hands. Indeed, I am particularly grateful to Owen for accompanying her himself."

It is a thing I should hardly have ventured to ask him. I quite imagined he would send one of the elderly confidential clerks—Mr. Simpson, for instance—a most respectable and trustworthy person."

"I hope it's all right, I'm sure," the dame replied. "But I can't see what is keeping the girl for two days after the funeral, all the same. And why is there no letter? Mary has a fortnight's leave of absence from that stupid hospital, and she had arranged to come here and stay with us."

There was a silence. Then Lady Kirwan pressed a button in the panelled wall.

"I will take my coffee in here," she said. Sir Augustus nodded, and picked up the newspaper once more.

A footman with powdered hair and large shoulder-knots brought in a little nacre-encrusted table, with a tiny silver cup, a bowl of dark-brown sugar-candy from Jamaica, and the long-handled brass pan from Turkey, which held the coffee.

He had hardly left the room when Lady Kirwan was startled by a sudden loud exclamation from Sir Augustus.

She rose from her seat in alarm, thinking that he was attacked by a sudden spasm of pain.

In a moment she was undeceived.

"Good Heavens," he said, "here are extraordinary goings on! I never read such a thing in my life! No wonder Mary has not come back."

Trembling with anxiety, Lady Kirwan ran to the back of her husband's chair, and, leaning over it, read the article, headed in large type, to which Sir Augustus pointed with a shaking finger.

STRANGE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

A MOUNTAIN PREACHER EXCITES A WHOLE COUNTRYSIDE.

Our North Wales correspondents telegraph accounts of some extraordinary scenes in Wales, which are occurring on the mountains of the Cader Idris district.

It seems that for some years past a mysterious recluse has been living in a small cottage high up on the great slate-mountain of Llan-y-Van. This man was a Mr. Lluellyn Lys, a member of a very ancient Welsh family, and possessed of small private means. His method of life was peculiar. Imbued with a deeply mystical religious spirit, he lived very much as the preaching hermits of the early days of the Christian faith. Sometimes he would remain secluded for many days, or be found upon the summit of some lonely mountain praying aloud to God. At others he would go preaching through the villages, exhorting every one to repentance and a holy life with marvellous eloquence and fervour.

In addition to this, the "Teacher," as this strange personality appears to have been known among the peasants and local miners, would sometimes hold vast meetings upon Sundays, high up in the hills. Thousands of people from far and near would gather together, and, standing upon a rock in their midst, Lluellyn Lys would speak with fiery exhortation, and lead those great musical choruses and hymns of praise for which the Celtic people are so famous.

"A few weeks ago all those—and there seem to have been many thousands—who regarded the Teacher as their spiritual adviser and leader, became aware that he was entertaining a guest at his lonely mountain home, for the first time within public remembrance. A strange man had appeared at the little railway station in the valley, and by Mr. Lys' orders he was carried up the mountain by various of the Teacher's adherents and disciples. The man, who was known only by the name of Joseph, was evidently recovering from a severe illness. He remained in Lluellyn's lonely cottage for some time, and the two men were attended by an old widow lady whose name is Mrs. Price.

During the stranger's sojourn strange rumours were spread round the country-side. The Teacher had more than once referred to him in public as the "Master," and had hinted that he was about to conduct some great religious campaign,

the precise nature of which was never clearly specified. It was also said, and said very generally, that some most extraordinary things were happening at the top of Moel Llan-y-Van.

Incredible as it may seem to-day, there are at the present moment hundreds of people in this part of Wales who confidently assert, and offer to prove, that Mr. Lluellyn Lys possessed the gift of healing. Dozens of cures are attributed to his agency. Be this as it may, the consensus of opinion not only credits the Teacher with something like miraculous power, but said that his strange visitor was possessed of even more wonderful attributes than he was.

A week ago Lluellyn Lys died.

It seems that, in mystical language, he had already foretold his decease. And now we come to the strange part of this excessively strange story.

Two days ago Lluellyn Lys was buried. But his was no ordinary burial; and, moreover, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that it may yet become the subject of an official inquiry.

When the news of the Teacher's decease spread over the surrounding country, from valley and mountain an enormous concourse of people assembled. The body—it is described as being like a statue of white marble—was taken from the cottage without a coffin and buried on the very highest point of the mountain Llan-y-Van—a spot where the dead preacher had been wont to pray.

It is understood that this was done by the dead man's wish and stipulation, though, probably, quite contrary to law. No one, however, interfered—and interference would, of course, have been useless against several thousand people, who appeared to be in an ecstasy of grief, and who were obviously determined to carry out the wishes of their dead friend to the letter.

If at this point readers of the *Daily Wire* express incredulity at what follows we can only say that we guarantee the substantial accuracy of our report in the completest way.

After the actual interment of the corpse, and amid the wailing cries of the vast multitude of mourners a man mounted the cairn of boulders which forms the highest part of the mountain—the exact summit, so to speak.

Immediately the sounds of mourning were hushed, as if at the beat of a conductor's bâton.

Our correspondents describe the scene as wonderfully impressive and without parallel in their very varied experience.

It was a cloudy morning, and somewhat chill in those

high places. Yet a beam of sunlight, white and sudden, fell upon the tall figure upon the cairn. Every one could see the man quite distinctly; every one knew that this was the stranger known as Joseph, who had been the companion of Lluellyn Lys during the last weeks of his life.

The sudden silence was perhaps due to the fact of this universal knowledge, but equally, perhaps, to another and extraordinary fact.

Joseph in appearance resembles the traditional pictures of the Christ in an astounding manner. It seems almost irreverent to write these words. But they are written with no such intention. This man, whoever he may be—charlatan and impostor, or sincere saint and reformer of our own day—is the living walking image of that idea which all the world has of Him who died upon the Cross!

The words came; not very many, neither mystical nor obscure, but plain statements of intention. Yet the voice hushed that vast multitude of people as if with a magician's wand. Deep and clear, full of a music that our correspondents say no orator of our day can compass, a voice that goes straight to the heart—so, we are informed, was the voice of this man Joseph.

The substance of his speech was startling—an actual shorthand report of the words will be found upon another page:

This man, call him what you will, believes that he has a Divine mission to come to London, that he may warn it of its sins and bring its inhabitants to the foot of the Cross.

With a band of disciples—we must use the word—he is even now speeding towards the metropolis. A dozen or more people are with him, and it is also said that the sister of the late Teacher, a very beautiful girl, who was formerly a hospital nurse, has joined the little band of fanatics. One thing is quite certain. London is on the eve of a new and most extraordinary sensation.

Thus the article concluded.

Lady Kirwan gave a gasp of dismay.

"Augustus!" she cried, "what a terrible scandal! What does it all mean? I was right! I knew something had happened to Mary. Why hasn't Mr. Owen looked after her properly? The poor girl has lost her senses, of course. She is under the

influence of some unscrupulous impostor. Oh, this is awful, awful! To think that a member of the House of Lys should come to this! What shall we do? What can we do? Something must be done at once!"

She had but hardly finished speaking, and both husband and wife were looking into each other's eyes with faces of perplexity and alarm, when the door opened and the butler entered.

"Mr. Owen has returned, Sir Augustus," he said, "and asks to see you immediately."

In a moment or two a tall, elderly gentleman, with grey side-whiskers and a keen, though benevolent face, was ushered into the room. He was in morning dress, carried a plaid travelling-coat upon his arm, and a hard felt hat in his hand.

He seemed anxious and distressed.

"I can't get up, Owen," Sir Augustus said at once. "I'm still a victim to this confounded gout. What's all this preposterous stuff I see in the *Daily Wire*? And where is my niece?"

The lawyer choked and swallowed. His face grew red and embarrassed. For a moment or two he did not speak.

Mr. Owen was a considerable man. He was one of the best known family solicitors in London. His reputation was unspotted; he was the confidant of many great folk, and he may or may not have been worth three hundred thousand pounds. But he was, at this moment, obviously embarrassed, and perhaps angry also.

"Kirwan," he said, at length, "we are old friends, and we have been in business relations for many years. You know, I think, that I am no fool. You have en-

trusted vast interests to my care. I have never failed you that I know of—until to-day."

"What has happened, dear Mr. Owen?" Lady Kirwan asked, terrified by the solemnity of the lawyer's manner. "Where is Mary?"

"I've only just arrived," Mr. Owen answered. "I came straight here from the station, Lady Kirwan. Your niece, Miss Mary Lys, has gone with that fellow they call Joseph, and his company of crack-brained fools. Short of force, I did everything a man could do to restrain her; but she beat me. It was impossible to move her from her decision. For my part, I believe the girl's mad!"

He paused, and both Sir Augustus and his wife realized that this eminent man was considerably affected.

In the radiance of the electric light they could see the beads of perspiration starting out upon his forehead like little pearls. The baronet's face had gone quite pale.

With difficulty he rose from his seat, and an oath escaped him as he did so.

"The little fool," he cried—"the fool! It's not your fault, Owen. Of course, I know that. But where is she now? Where is this precious company of tomfools and madmen?"

"I have every reason to believe," Mr. Owen answered with quiet emphasis, "that the whole crew—and Miss Lys with them—are in London at the present moment!"

CHAPTER VIII

"THE GOLDEN MAIDEN"

THE theatrical criticism of the *Daily Wire* was always printed on page 4; the more important news on page 6, over the leaf.

It was for this reason that Hampson, the editor of the *Christian Friend*, never saw the news from Wales, and realized nothing of the stupendous happenings there until the extraordinary events of the same night in London.

He had arrived at his office for a long day's work. Among his letters was one from a young man who, it appeared, had but lately arrived in the metropolis to fill a situation as clerk in a big mercantile house.

Hampson had inaugurated a special feature in the paper. It was a sort of "advice bureau," and already he knew that he had been able to help hundreds of people in this way.

The letter from the clerk, obviously a Christian man who desired to live a godly life, but was puzzled by the newness and strangeness of the modern Babylon, in especial asked one question. He had been invited by one of his fellows to attend a theatrical performance at one of the "musical comedy" houses. Although he knew nothing of theatres, save that there was a strong prejudice against them among his own people in the country, he had declined the invitation. The

result had been that he had endured a good deal of ridicule, and when asked to state his reasons for refusal, had been unable to do so. Now he asked the editor's opinion upon the whole matter.

The question was one that Hampson had never thoroughly gone into. He had certainly a low opinion of the calling of an actor or actress. He believed the body to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and therefore thought it wrong to nightly paint that body and expose its grace and beauty to the gaze of every one. It was years, however, since he himself had entered the doors of a theatre. While he was thinking the matter out, and wondering what answer he should make to the inquirer, his eye happened to fall upon the *Daily Wire*, which lay open on the desk beside him.

He took up the paper and read the criticism of the new play at the Frivolity—read it with very different feelings to those which animated Sir Augustus Kirwan on the evening of the same day.

If this was what the theatre was coming to, then let all decent men and women keep out of such places!

Yet he was a cautious man, and one who was averse to hasty judgments. He had, moreover, a strict love of truth, and an intense dislike for hearsay evidence. An idea struck him. He would himself go and see this play at the Frivolity! If it were really licentious and improper, he knew that it could not harm him personally. It would disgust him, but that was all. On the other hand, the critic might have exaggerated, or he might even have had some personal spite against the management of the theatre. Dramatic critics sometimes wrote plays themselves, and these plays were rejected! Such things had been. And it would be a good thing that his readers should have the impressions of a cool

and unbiassed mind upon a subject which was not without importance in the life of the modern Christian in London.

Accordingly he wrote a brief note to the business manager of the theatre, explaining exactly why he wished to see the play, and asking if a seat was to be had. This he sent round by a boy, with instructions that if there was a vacant seat he should purchase it for him.

In an hour the lad returned. He brought a courteous note from the manager, enclosing the coupon for a seat, marked "complimentary," and returning Hampson's ten-and-sixpence.

During the rest of the day the editor was very hard at work, and had no time to read any more news. The story of the strange doings upon the mountains in Wales, therefore, escaped him entirely.

He had heard nothing from Joseph, even yet, nor had he seen Mary Lys since they had climbed to the roof of St. Paul's Cathedral together. At that time, when both of them were filled with doubt and anxiety about Lluellyn and Joseph, they had seen the august symbol of the world's salvation painted on the sky. Through the terrible fog that hung over the Babylon of our times the crimson Cross had shone.

The curious circumstance had brought comfort and relief to both of them. It might be that they were sentimental, superstitious.

Yet God moves in a mysterious way, and who were they to say that the Father had not sent them a message from on high?

Miracle is not dead yet, whatever the materialists may say. Ask a captain of the Salvation Army if Mary Magdalene does not still come to the foot of the

Cross ! Ask the head of the Church Army if a thief is never converted at almost the last moment in his evil career ! Ask an Anglican priest, a Congregationalist minister—a Roman Catholic priest,—for their experiences of death-beds !

One and all will tell you that God rules the world still, the Holy Spirit yet broods upon the waters.

Hampson returned to his rooms in Bloomsbury. After a simple dinner, during which Butler's *Analogy* was propped up against the water-bottle, he changed into evening clothes and walked down to the Frivolity Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue.

The long curve of that street of theatres was thronged with carriages, motor broughams, and cabs. Beautifully-dressed women with filmy lace mantillas over their shining hair, attended by well-groomed men in opera hats and white cashmere scarves, descended from the vehicles and entered this or that theatre. The whole place blazed with light.

The great arc-lamps shone on the posters and the marble façades crowned with their huge electric advertisements. The smart restaurants of Piccadilly, Regent Street, and the Haymarket were pouring out their guests at this hour when all the plays were beginning.

The London world of pleasure was awake in all its material splendour, luxury and sin. The candle was alight, the gaudy moths fluttering around it.

A man and woman descended from a hansom just as Hampson arrived under the portico of the theatre, the woman so covered with jewels that these alone, to say nothing of her general manner and appearance, sufficiently indicated her class.

Hampson shuddered as he gave his hat and coat to an attendant, and walked down the softly carpeted

corridor through the warm, perfumed air to the stalls.

The theatre was very full. On all sides wealth and luxury displayed themselves in unbounded profusion. But this was an audience nearly every member of which was devoted to folly, idle amusement, and worse. Hampson saw vice stamped upon the faces all round him, vice or stupidity, and carelessness.

Immediately upon his left, however, there was a young man, sleek and immaculately dressed, who had a somewhat stronger face than many of the young fellows there. There was a certain strength about the jaw and poise of the head, an honesty in the blue eyes which the journalist noticed at once.

Hampson sighed. Doubtless, this young man was only just entering in upon the life of pleasure and sin. He was not quite a slave yet—his soul not irrevocably stained. But some day he would become like the curious old-young men who sat all round, men with pointed ears, heavy eyes that only brightened when they saw a pretty girl, mouths curved into listless and weary boredom.

What a brigade they were, these rich and vicious young fools who supported the Frivolity! Night after night they sat in their accustomed stall while the actresses danced and postured upon the other side of the footlights—solemn, vacuous, and pitiable.

Two men bent over from their seats, and one of them touched the fresh-looking young man by Hampson's side upon the shoulder.

The journalist heard names being exchanged—the first speaker was introducing a friend. From this he discovered who his companion was—Sir Thomas Ducaine. The name was quite familiar. The young

baronet owned an enormous property in Whitechapel. Some of the foulest and most fetid dens in Europe belonged to him. Filth and misery, gaunt hunger, and black crime crawled through hideous alleys, and slunk in and out of horrible places which were his.

Probably there was not a property owner in England who was responsible for the degradation of his fellow-creatures as this well-groomed young man in the stalls of the Frivolity Theatre. Hampson knew—none better. Had not he and Joseph starved in one of this man's attics? Yet, he reflected, probably Sir Thomas knew nothing whatever of the dreadful places from which he drew his vast revenues, had never visited them, never would visit them.

The passing thoughts of those dark days in Whitechapel sent the editor's mind with painful wonder to his absent friend and his mysterious silence, and a deep depression was beginning to steal over him when the orchestra concluded the overture and the curtain rose.

Always methodical, and with a great power of concentration, Hampton banished all other thoughts, and gave his undivided attention to the play he had come to criticize.

The scene showed the interior of a great London bar, a smart West End establishment. It was crowded with young men in shining silk hats, dove-coloured trousers, and fashionably-cut grey frock-coats. They were leaning over the counter, which ran down one side of the stage, and flirting with half a dozen girls dressed as barmaids. The scene was brilliant with light and colour, accurate in every detail, and, indeed, a triumph of the scene-painter's art.

After a moment or two the barmaids burst into a

chorus. The music was bright and tuneful, composed with real skill and sense of melody. Hampson, who had a good ear, and was himself an amateur musician, recognized the fact at once. But the words were incredibly vulgar and stupid, a glorification of drink, by the aid of which all troubles—and doubtless decency and duty also—might be easily forgotten.

The whole thing was nauseating, utterly disgusting, to Hampson. He blushed even, and looked round him to see how the people took it. With a sad wonder he saw smiles and appreciative gestures on every side. "The grins of the lost," he thought bitterly, and then remembered that far greater sinners than any of these fools had power to be, had yet been redeemed by the saving power of the red wounds of Christ.

He noticed, however, and with some degree of relief, that this ode to drunkenness did not apparently interest or amuse the young man on his left. Sir Thomas Ducaine neither smiled nor showed any sign of appreciation.

Sordid dialogue, prefatory to the thin story of the plot, began. The topical slang that fast and foolish people use was introduced with sickening reiteration.

This, and much more which it is not necessary to detail, formed the first scene—a short one—and preparatory to the real action of the play.

The thing went on. Hampson lay back in his softly-padded chair with a set, impassive face. He was well dressed; his evening suit had been built by a good tailor, and outwardly there was nothing to distinguish him from any other of these "lovers of the drama." But as he listened to this or that doubtful joke and *double entendre*, marked this or that dance or pose, realized the skill of each cold and calculated appeal

to the baser senses and passions, his heart was sick to death within him.

He saw how nearly every one of the young men who surrounded him was known to this or that girl in the chorus. Swift glances or smiles flashed backwards and forwards from stalls to stage. The whole thing was an enormous, smoothly-running mechanism of evil! A great house of ill fame! It was just that, no more nor less than that!

The curtain fell on a peculiarly suggestive scene at the end of Act II, fell amid a roar of applause and laughter. It was so arranged that the curtain descended hurriedly, as if to hide something that could not be witnessed.

For five or six minutes this dirty wickedness was over. Nearly every one got up and left their seats to go to the bar and take refreshment.

Hampson did not move, nor did Sir Thomas Ducaïne, though the two men behind asked him to accompany them to the *buffet*.

He happened to turn, and saw Hampson's face.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, with an entire disregard of the usual convention which binds his class. "Excuse me, but you seem rather sick of this."

"It's abominable!" Hampson answered, in a sudden burst of anger. "I never go to the theatre, so I suppose I'm behind the times. But I really shouldn't have thought that several hundreds of apparently decent people would have come to see this sort of thing."

"I'm very much of your opinion," the young man replied, "and I don't think I like it any better than you do. I never was fond of filth. But I just strolled in because I'd nothing much better to do."

He sighed, and, turning from Hampson, stood up and began to survey the house.

"Nothing better to do!" The words stung the journalist, and made him shudder when he thought of Whitechapel. This young, kindly, and obviously nice-minded man, had nothing better to do than to "drop in" at the Frivolity!

Dear God! Nothing better to do!

The electric bell whirred. Men began to make their way back to their seats, expectation was alight in most of the faces—faces somewhat flushed now with brandy-and-soda; eyes brighter now in anticipation of the opening scene of Act III!

This was the second night of the play, yet already the opening of Act III was being talked of all over London.

Mimi Addington was surpassing herself.

Mimi was the heroine, *par excellence*, of all the picture-postcards. Errand-boys whistled her songs, and told each other stories about her in whispers. The front pages of the foul "sporting" papers which depended upon their obscenity for their circulation were never without constant mention of the girl's name.

Young, lovely, talented—with the terrible cleverness that one must suppose the evil angels of Satan have—she stood almost alone in her success and evil. She was a popular idol, though there were some who knew the woman as she was—a high-priestess of degradation, a public preacher of all that is debased and low!

Hampson knew. He did not watch the life in which she shone like a red star. It was far alien from his own, utterly separate from the lives of all Christian people. But he was a man in the world, and he could not escape the popular knowledge.

"THE GOLDEN MAIDEN"

III

As the curtain went up once more he set his teeth and sent up a wordless prayer to God that his mind might not be influenced or soiled, that the Almighty would bring the woman to repentance and cause the scourge to cease.

She came upon the scene. There was a thunder of hands—even a few loud cries of welcome pierced the mad applause. Yes, she was beautiful—very beautiful indeed. And there was charm also. It was not a mere soulless loveliness of face and form.

After the first verse of the song, there was a momentary pause while the orchestra played the symphony on muted strings.

When she began again, beautiful and seductive as a siren, with a voice like a mellow flute. The lights were lowered in the auditorium. It was well, for many folk, even amid that gay and worldly audience, grew hot and flushed.

As the last triumphant notes of the song trilled through the theatre an extraordinary thing happened.

A deep trumpet voice rang through the house. The voice of a man, deep, musical and terrible—a voice that cleft the brain like a sword.

The lights leapt up once more, and all the vast audience, with a shudder of fear, turned to look at the face and form of him who had spoken.

Standing in the stage-box, surrounded by a group of sombre figures, a man was visible in the view of all.

Something went through the theatre like a chill wind. The music of the band died away in a mournful wail.

There were a few frightened shouts, and then came a deep, breathless silence.

Standing in the midst of them was one who, in face and form, seemed to be none else but Our Lord Himself!

Hampson knew that voice. Even as it pealed out he rose, staggered, and sank back into the arms of the man next to him. He did not know that Sir Thomas was pointing with outstretched arm to the figure of a woman who stood among the surrounding group in the box. He hardly heard the young baronet's agonized cry of "Mary! Mary!"

He heard only that awful accusing thunder—"WOE UNTO YOU, SAMARIA!"

There was an extraordinary silence in the theatre, such a silence as the Frivolity had probably never known before in the whole of its disreputable career.

The members of the orchestra dropped their instruments, and the gay music died away with a frightened wail. Mimi Addington stopped suddenly in her abominable song. No member of the vast audience made a single sound. The silence of fear, swift, astonished fear, lay over all the theatre.

Who was this man?

Joseph was, of course, in modern dress. But the long, dark cloak he wore, Lluellyn's cloak, which Mary had given him, a veritable mantle of Elijah, robbed the fact of any modern significance.

The frightened people in the theatre only saw come suddenly and mysteriously among them one who was the image and similitude of Christ Himself. It was as though He stood there.

The voice thrilled them through and through. In all their lives no single one of them had ever heard a voice like this.

There were those who had, at one time or another,

listened to great and popular preachers, famous political orators. But none of these had spoken with such a voice. All were thrilled by it, stirred and moved to the depths of their being. And there were some among the crowd in whose hearts the knowledge and love of God were only dormant, and not yet dead.

These few trembled exceedingly, for they recognized the voice with their spiritual, if not with their material ears.

Whoever this man might be—and the marvellous resemblance blazed out as it were into the theatre— whoever he might be, the Holy Ghost was speaking through his mouth!

The whole audience seemed turned to stone. Such a thing had never been known before. The big, uniformed attendants, who would have hustled out an ordinary intruder or brawler almost before the audience had had time to realize what was taking place, now stood motionless and silent.

"Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind. It shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked."

In the terrible music and menace of its warning, the voice cleft the air like a great sword. The people in the theatre cowered like a field of corn when the wind blows over it. Every face grew pale, and in the slight pause and breathless silence which followed Joseph's words, quick ears could distinguish a curious sound—or, rather, the intimation of a sound. It was as though muffled drums were sounding an enormous distance away, so far and faint that the listener feels that, after all, he may be mistaken, and there is nothing.

It was the beating of many human hearts.

Joseph came forward into the full view of every one.

His arm was outstretched, the marvellous eyes were full of a mystical fire and inspiration.

"This is a home of abominations," he cried, "the lust of the flesh, the pride of the eye. There!" he went on with unutterable scorn, pointing to Mimi Addington, with a sudden movement—"there is the priestess of evil whom you have assembled to worship. Her body is fair. It was the gift of God. Her voice is beautiful, she is subtle and skilled—these are also the gifts of the Most High. But she has abused and degraded these gifts. With her voice she has sung the songs of damnation, and chanted the music of hell. She has led many astray. There are homes in England desolate because of her. She has destroyed the peace of many homes. She has poured poison into the minds of the innocent and young, calling them to evil pleasure, and by her words leading them to think of the flowery paths of sin. She has caused many to stumble and offend, and unless she cast herself upon the infinite mercy of God, it were better that a millstone were put about her neck and she were cast into the sea."

The voice of the man with the message ceased for a moment.

There was a low sigh, though every one in the theatre heard it, and the wretched girl sank in a tumbled heap of senseless glitter and finery upon the floor.

A universal shudder of fear swept through the huge, brilliant building, a cumulative gasp of dismay—the material voice of many consciences awaking from sleep!

But no one moved to help the fallen actress, her companions on the stage stood absolutely still, not a man in the orchestra or the auditorium moved.

Then, with a swift movement, the accuser bent forward and pointed to the rows of sleek, well-groomed young men in the stalls.

"And you!" he cried, his voice more stern and menacing than before—"you who sit nightly at the feast of sin, what of you? Young and strong, your youth and strength are given you to serve the Lord. But you have made your lives an abomination, you bow down to foul idols, your doings stink in the nostrils of the just. I am come here to say to you that surely the Lord will smite you and humble you. You shall be as an oak that fadeth. Repent before it is too late. Seek God, and turn to Him. Do this and be saved. For you young men of London are even as the rulers in Sodom, and those who were set over Gomorrah. You have come in vanity, and you will depart in darkness, and your names shall be covered with darkness, and you shall be utterly consumed."

And then an almost incredible thing occurred. The terrible voice began a series of *personal* accusations, as if indeed the hidden secrets of the hearts of those who heard him were indeed laid bare, some supernatural instinct had raised the curtain that hung before many evil lives.

"There sits one among you"—so in each case Joseph began, though no name was ever mentioned. But one by one those faultlessly-dressed men of London's wealthy pleasure brigade were stricken down as by spears. So terrible a scene was without parallel in experience. Terrible stories were revealed, black deeds sprang suddenly to light, and gradually a low moaning sound began to fill the theatre, a deep and dreadful accompaniment to the pealing voice of one who seemed to be the Man of Sorrows Himself.

Suddenly a woman, somewhere in the back of the pit, began to shriek horribly. In a second more the whole theatre was in a turmoil. Agonized groans and cries of heartrending shame and sorrow grew into a piercing cacophony of sound, drowning the preacher's voice, and seeming to rend the very walls with its unutterable mournfulness and despair.

Then, it was never discovered how or why, though the point was ever afterwards debated, every single light in the theatre went out.

Through the darkness, and the sudden calm which this added fear induced for a moment, the mighty voice was heard, tolling like a great bell, with its burden of "Repent! Repent! Repent!"

There was, however, no physical panic. No one was bodily injured. When light was at length restored, it was seen that the strange figure, with its little accompanying band of followers, had utterly disappeared. The curtain had fallen and hidden the stage, the place where Joseph had stood was dark and empty; every one was standing and shaking with fear, and white faces were turned to faces whiter still, asking each other what this thing might mean.

With hardly a sound, the huge audience poured silently out of the Frivolity. People who, a few short hours before, had passed within the doors light-hearted, smiling, and eagerly expectant of the mischievous nonsense they had come to see, now moved with drawn faces and hanging heads. Lips were clenched with resolve, or still trembled and muttered in fear. Cheeks were red with terrible shame or blanched with agony. Out they came like a procession of ghosts, and—London was just the same!

It was obvious that no inkling of what was going

on in the Frivolity Theatre had penetrated to the outside world.

Shaftesbury Avenue blazed with light as usual. Crowds—but how different to this one!—poured from the other playhouses. The street was full of cabs and carriages, the roar of late traffic, the hoarse shouts of newsboys selling the last edition of the evening papers. The great restaurants—Trocadero, Criterion, Monico—were hung with huge arc-lamps, turning the night into wan and feverish day. Round about Piccadilly Circus and Regent Street everything was precisely the same as it had been. Was it all a dream? the late audience of the Frivolity were asking each other.

The question was not answered in words. Suffering eyes and stricken faces told their own tale.

Hampson, the journalist, was full of a wonder and awe for which there was no name. He had recognized Joseph at once, a changed—marvellously changed—Joseph, but his old friend still.

The whole thing had come upon him like a thunder-clap, for it must be remembered that he had not seen the report in the *Daily Wire*, and knew nothing of the occurrences in Wales.

The extraordinary transformation of his friend, the supernatural power of his words, the enormous hypnotic power of them—what did all these things betoken?

He stood motionless, just opposite to the door of the Eccentric Club, careless of the crowd that passed and jostled him, lost in a startled dream.

Then he felt some one touch his arm, and, looking up quickly, saw that the young man who had sat by him in the theatre, and whom he had heard addressed as Sir Thomas Ducaine, was accosting him.

The baronet's face was white and frightened, and he seemed oblivious of all ordinary conventions.

"I say," he began, in a curiously high-pitched and nervous voice, "what does it all mean? You were sitting next to me, you know. And there was a girl I know well—very well indeed—with that man; but I thought she was in Wales——"

He broke off short, realizing that he was speaking to a total stranger.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but I am unstrung, as I fancy most of us are to-night who have been to the Frivolity."

He lifted his hat mechanically, and was about to move away.

Hampson recollected a fact which he had hitherto forgotten. Sir Thomas had called out "Mary!" when the mysterious party of strangers had first appeared in the box.

"You mean Miss Lys?" he said.

The young man with great possessions stopped dead.

"You know her?" he said, in accents of extreme surprise. "Then you know who the—the man was, too? At first I thought—oh, a mad thought!—because of the extraordinary resemblance!"

He was still a little incoherent, and unable to speak the thoughts that were rushing through his startled brain. With shaking hand, he took out a gold cigarette-case and tried to light one of the little white tubes.

A tall policeman came up to them.

"You must move on, if you please, gentlemen," he said. "The pavements must be kept clear at this time of night."

"Look here," Sir Thomas said to Hampson, "my

name is Ducaine—Sir Thomas Ducaine. You know something of all this—you know Miss Lys. I want to talk to you. I must talk to you, sir! Now, I live only a few yards from here—my house is in Piccadilly. Won't you come and spend an hour or two with me? It would be a great kindness. I'm sure you want some supper, too, after all this terrible excitement."

Hampson made up his mind immediately. He was attracted to the fresh-looking, strong-faced young man. He liked what he had said about the leprous play, before Joseph's appearance. And he also was terribly bewildered, and needed human companionship and talk. Moreover, he was faint with hunger—the emotions he had endured had robbed his blood of all his strength, and his brain had burnt up the vital force within him. He would go with Sir Thomas.

"I thank you!" he said, noting, with surprise, how thin and tired his own voice was. "I shall be glad to come. My name is Hampson, and I am the editor of a weekly newspaper."

"We will go at once," Sir Thomas answered, and crossing the Circus, the strangely assorted pair walked rapidly down Piccadilly.

They had traversed about a third of that street of clubs and mansions when the baronet stopped at the massive door of a large bow-windowed house, opened it with a tiny Bramah key, and Hampson found himself, for the first time in his life, in the house of a wealthy and fashionable young gentleman of London.

A silent manservant took their coats, and the host led the way to a small room, which opened into the hall at the further end of it. Here another and older man was waiting—the butler, evidently. A small round table was laid for supper with dainty richness.

A mass of hothouse violets stood in a silver bowl in the centre ; there were tall hock-glass of Venetian ware, purple also ; and the table-cloth and serviettes were fringed with purple.

" Bring some supper at once, please ! " Sir Thomas said. " Something light, Mr. Hampson ? Oh, very well ! Some *consommé*, Bryce, some devilled oysters—yes, and an omelette afterwards. That will do."

" And the wine, Sir Thomas ? "

" Oh, bring some hock and seltzer ! "

The man withdrew.

" Excuse me one moment, Mr. Hampson," the baronet said. " I am expecting a rather important telegram. If it has arrived, they will have put it in the library. I will go and see."

He hurried out of the room. Hampson looked round him. The walls were panelled in white, and priceless old sporting prints, full of vivid colour and movement, had been let into the panels. A great couch, covered in blue linen, with broad white stripes, was drawn up to the cosy fire, and on the tiger skin which served as a hearthrug a little Japanese spaniel was lying asleep. In a moment or two Sir Thomas returned. He had changed his evening coat for a smoking-jacket of quilted satin, and wore a pair of straw-woven Italian slippers upon his feet.

" Supper won't be a moment," he said, sinking down upon the couch. " I have trained all my people to be quick. But if you are not too tired, will you tell me, or begin to tell me, what you know ? This means more to me than you can possibly imagine."

" How shall I begin ? "

" Who is that man who appeared in the theatre, and swayed and held it with the force of his words ? "

"He is named Joseph Bethune," Hampson answered, "and he is a great personal friend of my own."

"And why was Miss Lys with him? And what do you know of her?"

With perfect frankness Hampson explained how Mary had saved his life. He told of the strange occurrences in connexion with Joseph's accident, recovery, and journey to Wales.

"Miss Lys, I know," Hampson said, "was greatly pressed by Joseph and the occurrences connected with him. Only three days ago I met her, and we talked about him. She had not heard from her brother, with whom Joseph was staying. I had not heard from Joseph, either, for several weeks. We were both distressed."

Suddenly, as he said this, Hampson started. He remembered the great fiery cross that he and Mary had seen hanging over London from the top of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Why should he keep back anything? he thought; and in short, graphic sentences he described this marvel also.

Sir Thomas was intensely interested. His face was grave and set, his eyes wide with wonder.

"Of course, I knew Miss Lys had a brother in Wales," he said. "I know her very well. But she has never said anything to me of this man Joseph, whom she sent to stay with him. What you have told me is extraordinary. Frankly, I could not have believed in all of it had I not been present at the theatre to-night. But I still fail to establish any connexion between Joseph in Wales with Lluellyn Lys and Miss Lys with Joseph at the theatre."

"And I am as much in the dark as you are," Hampson answered.

While they had been speaking, the butler had been superintending the movements of a footman who was bringing in the soup and the chafing-dish with the oysters. Now he came up to his master, carrying a silver tray, upon which was a folded newspaper.

"I am sorry, Sir Thomas," he said, "but I could not help overhearing part of what you and this gentleman were saying. You were mentioning some names which made me think that you could not have seen the paper to-day, sir."

"Why, what d'you mean, Bryce?" Sir Thomas asked, in amazement.

The butler took the paper, opened it, pointed to a column, and said:

"The name 'Joseph' and Mr. Lys, sir. Mr. Lys is dead, sir. It's all here, in a special telegram to the *Daily Wire*."

Sir Thomas jumped up from his seat, seized the paper, and spread it out upon the supper-table.

Hampson rose also, and together the two men read the account of the doings in Wales with eyes that were nearly starting out of their heads.

The butler and the footman had meanwhile discreetly withdrawn.

Sir Thomas was the first to break the silence. He read less quickly than the practised journalist, but he was not long in supplying the connecting links of the strange story.

He raised his hand to his head, with a weary and dejected movement.

"It is beyond me," he said. "Since chance has thrown us together, and you have been so frank with

me, I will be equally so with you. I, Mr. Hampson, have long had hopes that Mary Lys would be my wife."

As they sat down to supper, probably even in London, that city of marvels, no couple more unlike could have been found anywhere together at that midnight hour. The one was a millionaire, rich even in this age of huge fortunes. He was young, goodly to look upon, in perfect health, and a universal favourite in society.

The man who confronted him was unknown, of humble origin, frail body, and regarded himself as abnormally lucky to be earning four hundred pounds a year by constant, highly specialized toil, and the exercise of a keen and nimble intelligence.

Yet on this night, at any rate, chance—or may we not say rather the exercise of the Supreme Will?—had brought them together in the strangest circumstances and under the strangest conditions. Moreover, unlike as they were in temperament, position and way of thought, both were drawn to each other. They had become friends at once, and they were aware of the fact.

For the first few minutes of the meal there was silence. Hampson was physically sick and faint. His whole body cried out for food and nourishment. He did not know that the *consommé* he was enjoying was a *consommé* of clear turtle, but almost immediately strength began to return to him. He was not an absolute teetotaller, though it was only on the rarest occasions that he touched intoxicants. So tonight, though he partook sparingly of a simple glass of golden hock, he was unaware that it was the *cuvée* of '94, from the famous vineyard of Wauloh Landskrona.

Sir Thomas broke the silence.

"We have been strangely brought together," he said, "and by forces which I do not pretend to analyse or understand. But I can trust you, I know, and I am going to tell you something of my life."

He paused and frowned, as if thinking deeply. Then he began again—

"I have known Mary Lys for a long time," he said slowly and with great difficulty, "and I have loved her deeply almost from the first. To me she is the most precious thing on earth. She is far, far above me—that I know; but, nevertheless, a great love gives courage, and I dared to tell her of mine. I think—indeed, I am sure—that she cares for me. But there has always been a great barrier between us, and one which has seemed insurmountable. It seems more so than ever now, after what I have learnt to-night. I have always been unable to believe in Christianity. It means nothing to me. It is a beautiful fable, that is all. And I cannot pretend, Mr. Hampson—I would not if I could. To gain the woman I love for my wife I would do anything except live a lie. No union founded on a fundamental deceit can be a happy one. If I pretended to believe I should never know a moment's peace. Mary would soon find it out by that marvellous sixth sense of hers, and both our lives would be ruined beyond recall."

"I fear," Hampson answered sadly, "that there are many people who profess and call themselves Christians who would have no such scruples, Sir Thomas. They do you honour."

"Oh, no," the baronet answered. "It's temperament with me, that's all. Well, again and again I have returned to the attack, but it has been useless.

Nothing will move her. However much she loved me, so she stated, she would never marry me unless I gave up everything and followed Christ. Those were her very words. And that I cannot do, for Christ is nothing to me, and does not touch my heart at all. I can't believe in Him. It is an impossibility. And I am rich, very rich. I love my life; I am fond of beautiful things; I shrink from pain and sorrow and poverty. And yet I don't think I am a bad man, as men go. I have no particular vices. When you saw me at that filthy play to-night it was quite an accident. I hate that sort of thing; the life that the Frivolity type of man leads is absolutely disgusting to me. I felt unhappy and bored; it happened that I had no engagement to-night, and I turned into the first place I came to, without a thought. But Mary wants me to give up everything and work among the poor—as a very poor man myself. How can I give it up—my houses, estates, my yacht, and pictures, all the things that make life pleasant? I can't do it! And now, after to-night, Mary will be farther away from me than ever."

He spoke with grief and despair in his fresh, young voice. Obviously he was deeply stirred and moved. But there was doubt in his voice also. He seemed to be talking in order to convince himself. There was a struggle going on within his mind.

"What a wonderful man your friend Joseph must be," he said suddenly. "There cannot be any one else like him in the world. There seems something almost supernatural about him—only, of course, the supernatural does not exist."

Then Hampson spoke.

"I know that you will believe what I am going to

tell you," he said quietly. "First, I must say a few words about myself. All my thinking life—since I was a very young man—I have been a convinced Christian. Even in the darkest hour my faith has not wavered, whatever my sins and errors may have been. Joseph, on the contrary, has been as convinced an atheist as you say that you yourself are. A hundred times in my hearing he has derided Jesus Christ and mocked at God. He threw up a great career at Cambridge because he felt it his duty to express his convictions in public. Only a few weeks ago he was exactly of the same way of thinking. To-night you heard him sway and move hundreds of sinful men and women directly inspired by God. Like a prophet of old—even as Jesus Himself—he preached the truth in the places of the ungodly. You, yourself, were profoundly stirred. Now, I ask you, what does this mean?"

Sir Thomas had been gazing at his guest with deep interest and wonder.

"You startle me, sir," he said. "You overwhelm me with what you tell me. I must believe you. I do indeed! But what had changed him? Tell me that!"

"The power of the Holy Ghost," said the journalist. There was a silence.

Sir Thomas leant back in his chair with an abstracted gaze. He had eaten nothing, though his guest, wiser than he, had made a sufficient and recuperative meal.

The little Japanese spaniel rose from his sleep before the glowing fire, and put his nose into his master's hand. Sir Thomas stroked the tiny creature absently.

"The Holy Ghost?" he said, fixing his eyes upon Hampson. "What is that? Who can say?"

"The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

"I would," the young man said, with great sadness—"would that the Holy Ghost would come to me also."

He had hardly finished the sentence—probably the first prayer he had ever made since he lisped "Our Father" at his mother's knee—when the door opened, and the butler entered the room.

"A note, Sir Thomas," the man said. "A note from Miss Lys. The bearer awaits an answer."

The young man took the note with trembling fingers and tore it open. This was what he read—

"I saw you in the theatre to-night, and I knew that you were disturbed about me. Have no fear. I am writing this from my aunt's house, where I went immediately when we left the theatre. But I want you to come and see me here to-morrow, quite early. Would ten o'clock be too soon? I have something of the highest importance to say to you. Send back an answer to say that you can come. I have been here for an hour, and I have been thinking of you the whole time. I have a premonition about you—a happy one!

"MARY."

CHAPTER IX

A LINK CHAPTER

JOSEPH, his followers, and Mary Lys, had passed out of the theatre without hindrance in the dark. They encountered no one in their passage, and found themselves in Shaftesbury Avenue as people pass from one dream into another. The faces of all of them were pale and set, but no one spoke.

It is a well-known fact that hardly any one attracts attention in the streets of London unless because of noise or eccentric behaviour. This is quite true of the daytime, and especially true at night. So cosmopolitan is the modern Babylon, so intent upon their own business or pleasure are the inhabitants, that a Chinaman in full native costume or an admiral in full-dress would do no more than excite the merest passing regard.

When, therefore, Joseph and his companions walked up the busy pleasure-street, they were almost unnoticed. A man with a soft felt hat pressed down upon his forehead, a bearded man wearing a black cloak of a somewhat peculiar cut—what was there in that? A hospital nurse and a few grave-faced men in country-clothes and obviously from the country—who was to give them any notice?

It happened, therefore, that the little party were well on their way towards Oxford Street before the first member of the audience had left the Frivolity. As

far as any knowledge of their whereabouts was concerned, they might have vanished into thin air.

They walked on in silence, Joseph leading the way with Mary, the half-dozen men following behind.

When Oxford Street was reached, Joseph hailed a cab.

"You have been with us long enough for to-night, sister," he said; "your aunt and uncle must be anxious about you, and you owe them a duty after you have fulfilled your duty to the Lord. Truly, the Holy Spirit has been with us on this night, during the first few hours we have been here. May He always be with us and bless and prosper our great undertaking! Good-night, and God bless you, my dear sister. If it be God's will we shall all meet again on the morrow. It may be that, even before then, some one of us will receive a sign or a revelation."

His eyes shone with mystical fire as he said this, and watched the cab drive away into the roar of lighted traffic.

Then he turned to his companions.

"Brethren," he said, "I feel, I know not why or how, that my work to-night is not yet ended. But go you to your lodgings. I will be with you for prayer and to break the fast not long after dawn. You trust me still? You believe in our great work? You are not terrified by the noise and the glitter of this wicked, mighty city? If there is one among you who would even now draw back, and once more seek the quiet hills of Wales, then he may yet do so on this very night."

"We have no home, master," one of the men said, Owen Rees by name, and obviously speaking in the name of his companions. "We have no home but the

Kingdom of God. We have set our hand to the plough, and will not turn back. The Lord is with us," he concluded simply—"whatever and why should we fear?"

"Then, brethren," Joseph answered, "God be with you. That omnibus there will take you to the door of the place by the station where we have taken our lodging. David Foulkes knows the number, and has the money. Pray for us all."

With these words he turned and strode away westward. They gazed after him until the tall, black figure was swallowed up by the crowd.

On and on went Joseph, regardless of all around him. His mind was full of doubt and fear, despite the calm words he had spoken to his disciples. All the saints of God have known dark and empty moments, wherein all seems hopeless and sad, and the great world seems closing round, shutting them off from the Almighty. It is always thus. We are tried and tempted to the last. We also must know faintly some of those hours of agony which the Man of Sorrows Himself knew and suffered.

It was thus with Joseph now. During the tremendous effort in the theatre he had been conscious that God was with him, and speaking through the mouth of His servant. He was the vessel of an Unseen and Awful Power. In a flash of Divine inspiration he had known of the lives of the men who sat below him.

But when it was all over, a reaction set in. He was filled with gloomy and troubled thoughts. Had his words been right. *Words* after all? Was the impulse which had drawn him to the theatre with irresistible strength an impulse from on high? And who was

he, after all, that he should lead others in a new crusade against the sin and wickedness of this great city?

He felt exactly as if some actual personality which had been animating him was now withdrawn.

To his left, Park Lane stretched away towards Piccadilly, the palaces there all blazing with light. It was typical of what he had come to denounce, to warn, and to save.

And how was it possible that he, a weak man, could do this thing?

He walked on. Half-way down Park Lane he saw that a coffee-stall stood in the shadow of the Park railings, drawn up close to the kerb. The sight reminded him that he had not eaten for many hours, and he crossed the road towards it.

There were no customers but himself, and in a moment or two a steaming cup of coffee and two great wedges of bread-and-butter stood before him.

He had never enjoyed a meal so much, he thought idly—no, not even in the recent days of starvation in Whitechapel, when an unexpected windfall had provided him and Hampson with food.

Whitechapel! What a lifetime of experience had been his since those days! Wales, the mystical life with Lluellyn Lys——

A flush of shame and sorrow came over him. Why had he doubted even for a single moment the power and guidance of God! Had not the Holy Ghost been always with him—always, from the very first?

"O Lord," he cried, in his heart, "forgive Thine unworthy servant his weak doubts and fears! I know that Thou art with me, now, and forever more!"

He had concluded the short and unspoken prayer when he was startled by a voice.

He had not noticed that when the coffee-stall proprietor—an old man with snow-white hair, and large, horn-rimmed spectacles—had given him the coffee, he had returned to a large book he was reading.

Now Joseph looked round suddenly, and realized that the old fellow was saying the sentences aloud to himself.

"He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him; yea, I was with him in trouble. I will deliver him, and bring him to honour."

Joseph put down his pennies upon the counter. The answer to his prayer had come, once more God had spoken.

"Thank ye!" said the old man, in a strong Scotch accent. "I doot but I startled ye with me reading. I read aloud to my wife, who can nae mair see to read for hersel', and sae I've got in the way o't. But they're gran' words, lad."

"Thank you for them, and God bless you!" Joseph answered; and with the old fellow's kindly "Good night!" ringing in his ears, resumed his walk.

He was immeasurably comforted and helped, and his whole soul went up in a burst of praise and adoration.

No thought of sleep came to him. He no longer felt physically weary. He was impelled to walk and pray for sleeping London.

"Lord, grant that they will hear me? Lord, send down Thy Holy Spirit upon me, and give me Thy grace! Raise up great and powerful helpers for the work, for I am weak and poor."

He was in Piccadilly now, and as he prayed he walked more slowly.

Oh, that those great people who lived in this wonder-

ful street—now so dark and silent—would open the doors of their hearts that Christ might enter in!

The dark was suddenly illuminated.

A door swung slowly open, and two men in evening dress stood together upon the threshold.

He turned instinctively and looked them full in the face.

There was a startled cry of "Joseph!" And as if in a dream he mounted the steps and passed under the lintel.

The door closed quietly behind him.

CHAPTER X

THE COUSINS

IT was midnight when Mary Lys arrived at her aunt's house in Berkeley Square. Lady Kirwan had gone to bed ; but it happened, so the butler told her, that Miss Kirwan was sitting up in her boudoir, in the hopes that her cousin might yet arrive that night.

The greeting between the two girls was warmly affectionate. Marjorie had always loved Mary as a sister, loved her and revered her deeply. The pretty society girl was certainly of a butterfly nature, loving the bright and merry side of life, and unwilling to look upon its darker aspects. Yet she was unspoiled at heart, and the constant spectacle of Mary's devotion to the suffering and poor of the world, her steadfast pursuit of a hard and difficult path, always touched the younger girl.

"Oh, you poor dear," she said, "I am so glad you have arrived at last ! We have all been so anxious about you. Mother has been actually crying, and father is in a great way. Mr. Owen, the solicitor who went with you to poor Lluellyn's funeral, has been here, and there has been something in the paper, too ! We have all been so upset !"

While Marjorie was speaking, her maid had entered and taken Mary's nurse's cloak from her. Mary sank into a chair.

"Dear Marjorie," she said, "I'm so sorry! I blame myself very much. I ought, of course, to have sent auntie a telegram. But such wonderful things have happened and are happening that my mind has been taken from everything else. It was very wrong of me."

"Never mind now, dear! But how pale you are! You have gone through so much, poor dear, of course! You must have something to eat at once, and afterwards you shall tell me everything. Antoinette shall get you something—would some soup or some chicken-jelly do?"

Mary asked for a bowl of bread-and-milk, and while she was waiting gazed round her cousin's pretty sanctum with a sense of rest and ease which was most grateful to her overstrung nerves, her utterly exhausted body and mind. Marjorie went into her bedroom, which opened into the boudoir, unwilling to tire Mary by questions until she was refreshed by food.

It was a beautiful place, this nest of the wealthy, happy maiden of Society, though it had individuality and character also. It was thought out, the expression of a personality, and no mere haphazard collection of costly and beautiful things flung together anyhow, without regard to fitness or arrangements.

How peaceful and cultured it all was!

For some moments the tired girl abandoned herself to the gracious influence of the place, enjoying a moment of intense physical ease. Then, swiftly, her thoughts sprang over London from West to East. She saw the huge, gaunt hospital, its dim wards full of groaning sufferers, lying there in night-long agony that the rich and fortunate might build themselves just such "lordly pleasure-houses" as this. She

thought of the flaring gin-palaces of Whitechapel, at this hour full of the wretched and the lost. The noise, the hideous oaths, the battered, evil faces of vile men and women—men and women made in God's image, men and women whom Jesus came to save, but who had never had a chance. It all came to her with sudden vividness: the sounds, the smells, the crude raw colouring.

A passionate fervour of love welled up in her pure heart, a passionate rejection of the soft and pleasant things of life. Oh, that she could do something, something, however small, to help all this sorrow and pain, to purge London of its sores, to tell those who lived in high places and wore soft raiment of the terrible Nemesis they were laying up for themselves in another world!

Marjorie Kirwan only saw a pale-faced and beautiful girl, whom she loved, sitting at a little octagonal table sipping a bowl of milk. But if there were any of God's angels in that room—and may we not suppose that the Almighty Father had given so high and pure a spirit into especial charge?—if there were, indeed, august and unseen presences there, they saw a saint praying to God for the conversion of London and for success in the great battle which she had come to wage with Joseph and his companions.

"That's better, dear!" Marjorie said, her pretty face all alight with sympathy, and, it must be said, with curiosity also. "Now, do please tell me what all these mysterious things mean? What is all this in the newspaper? And your Joseph, the man with the wonderful eyes, the man we saw in the cab some weeks ago, before poor dear Lluellyn's death, what is he doing? Why were you with him?"

"I don't know how I can tell you, dear," Mary said, suddenly alive to the extreme difficulty of the task which lay before her, for how could she hope to explain the deep solemnness and import of the coming mission?

"Oh, but I am sure I shall understand!" Marjorie answered. "And I am certain it is awfully interesting!"

Mary winced. The light words jarred upon her mood of deep fervour and resolve; but, gathering her powers together, she did her best.

"I believe," she said, in grave, quiet tones, "that a special revelation is to come to London in the person of Joseph. Strange and, indeed, miraculous things have happened. God has spoken in no uncertain way, and the Holy Spirit has manifested Himself as He has never done before in our time. I cannot now go into all the circumstances attending my dear brother's death. That they were supernatural and God-sent no one who witnessed them can have any manner of doubt. But, briefly, I can tell you just this. The Holy Ghost has descended upon this man Joseph in full and abundant measure, even as He descended upon the Apostles of old. Joseph and a few devoted companions have come to London. I have come with them. We are about to wage a holy war against the wickedness of London, and the Spirit is with us.

"I cannot measure or define Joseph's new nature. It is all beyond me. But I have thought deeply about it, and this is what I think. Joseph seems to be two persons, at different times. It almost appears to be a case of what the French doctors who are experimenting with hypnotism call "dual control." Yet both these natures are quite distinct from his old one. He was

an atheist, you know, until he went to Wales, but now he is the most sincere, and convinced believer that I have ever met. So far he is no more than a brilliant and high-minded man who is trying to live a holy life, a man such as one has met before, now and then. But the other side of him is quite different again. At times he seems to one almost supernatural—or perhaps *super-normal* is the better word. Something comes into him. He is filled with the Holy Ghost. And there were such strange circumstances about his change of character and dear Lluellyn's death. . . . Do you know, dear, I sometimes wonder if it mightn' be that an angel of God inhabits him at times! People can be possessed by evil spirits, why couldn't they be controlled by good ones?"

Marjorie listened earnestly, the light fading out of her bright face as she did so.

"I don't think I quite understand," she said, with a little shudder. "Anyhow, it all seems very strange and—— What can Joseph do—what can you do? Surely there will be a great deal of trouble and scandal! And, Mary darling, you mustn't be mixed up in anything of this sort. Oh, it would never do! What would father and mother say? Why, it's like"—she hesitated for a simile. "Why, it's like being a member of the Salvation Army! You can't go about dressed like that, dear—and in the streets, too, with a trombone. You are not your dear sweet self to-night, dear, so we won't talk about it any more now. You have been through so much, no wonder you are tired. Go to bed now, and you will be better in the morning. They will have taken your boxes to your room, and I will send Antoinette to you at once."

Mary rose.

"I do need sleep," she said, with a faint smile. "I do need it dreadfully badly. But about my boxes, Marjorie dear. I only had one, and I have forgotten all about it, I'm afraid. I suppose it's at the station or somewhere. Joseph led us straight from the station to the theatre."

"The theatre! You've been to the theatre to-night! Before coming here! Are you mad, Mary?"

Marjorie's face had grown quite white, her voice was shrill in its horror and incredulity. What could her cousin mean? Did she actually assert that two days after her brother's funeral she had gone to a theatre with a strange man, and kept the whole household in Berkeley Square in a state of suspense, while she did this dreadful thing?

"I can't explain, dear," Mary answered, in a tired voice. "But you will know all about it to-morrow. It is not as you think. And now I will really go to bed."

She kissed her astonished cousin, and, with a faint smile, left the boudoir under convoy of the French maid.

After her last prayer—for her whole life was one long prayer—she fell into a deep and dreamless sleep, but not before she had sent a certain note. . . .

There was but little sleep for Marjorie that night. The hour was not late for her, it was not yet one o'clock, and night after night in the season she would dance till dawn.

But the girl was stirred and frightened to the depths of her rather shallow nature by the things which she had heard from Mary. The deep solemnity and utter reality of Mary's words were full of a sort of terror to Marjorie. They came into her gay, thoughtless

and sheltered life with unwelcome force and power. She wanted to hear no such things. Life was happy and splendid for her always. It was one continual round of pleasure, and no day of it had palled as yet. There was nothing in the world that she might wish for that she could not have. Her enormous wealth, her beauty, social position, and personal fascination brought all men to her feet.

And incense was sweet in her nostrils! Heart-whole, she loved to be adored. Religion was all very well, of course. All nice people went to church on Sunday morning. It was *comme il faut*, and then one walked in the Park afterwards for church parade, and met all one's friends.

Every Sunday Marjorie and Lady Kirwan attended the fashionable ritualistic church of St. Elwyn's, Mayfair. The vicar, the Honourable and Reverend Mr. Persse, was a great friend of Marjorie's, and she and her mother had given him three hundred pounds only a few weeks ago for the wonderful new altar frontals worked by the Sisters of Bruges.

But Mary's religion! Ah, that was a very different thing. It was harsh, uncomely, unladylike even.

And what did this preposterous business about "Joseph" mean? Marjorie had seen the paper, and could make nothing of it. And then the theatre! Mary was making fun of her. She could not really have meant——

With these thoughts whirling in her brain and troubling it, the girl fell asleep at last. Although she did not know it nor suspect it, she was never again to wake exactly the same person as she had been. She did not realize that her unconscious antagonism to Mary's words sprang from one cause alone, that a process had

begun in her which was to lead her into other paths and new experiences.

She did not know that, at last, for the first time in her bright, careless life, conscience was awake.

It was not till nearly nine o'clock that she awoke. Antoinette had peeped into the bedroom several times. When at length the maid brought the dainty porcelain cup of chocolate, a bright sun was pouring into the room through the apricot-coloured silk curtains.

Marjorie did not immediately remember the events and her sensations of the night before. When she did so, they all came back in a sudden flash of memory.

"Antoinette," she said quickly, "find Mrs. Summers"—Lady Kirwan's maid—"and ask if I can come to mamma's room at once."

In a minute the maid returned.

"M'lady is nearly dressed, mademoiselle," she said. "Elle sera bien contente de voir mademoiselle toute de suite."

Slipping on a dressing-gown and fur slippers, Marjorie went to her mother's room immediately. She was bursting with eagerness and anxiety to tell her the news. She was not in the least ill-natured or small-minded. She had not the least wish to "tell tales." But she was genuinely and seriously alarmed about her beloved cousin's future.

She found Lady Kirwan already dressed and sitting in her boudoir. The elder lady wore a face of utter consternation, and her daughter saw at once that there was little she could tell her.

Mrs. Summers, an elderly, confidential maid, was in the room, and there was a pile of morning papers upon the writing-table.

Nothing that went on in Berkeley Square ever escaped the discreet Summers. She was perfectly aware of Mary's late arrival, and that she had come without any luggage. When Mary had been put to bed, she had found out from Antoinette all that the French girl could tell her.

And the morning journals, which Mrs. Summers generally looked over before taking them to her mistress, supplied the rest.

All London was at this moment ringing with the news of what had happened at the Frivolity Theatre the night before. There had been several daily journalists among the audience, and plenty of other people either directly connected with, or, at any rate, in touch with, the Press.

The news eclipsed everything else. There were columns of description, rumour and report.

Those who had actually been present had gone straight to the offices of their papers while still under the influence of the tremendous scene they had witnessed.

Joseph was in nearly every case identified with the hero of the strange episodes on the Welsh Hills as exclusively reported in the *Daily Wire* special of the day before. But the wildest rumours and conjectures filled the papers.

Some said that the stranger and his disciples had appeared miraculously in a sudden flash of light, and disappeared equally mysteriously. The extraordinary and heart-piercing likeness of the stranger to the generally accepted pictures of Our Lord was spoken of with amazement, incredulity, dismay, or contempt, as the case might be.

And nearly all of the papers spoke of a beautiful

woman's face beside the preacher, a face like the face of a Madonna—Raphael's picture in the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican—alive and glowing.

Here was something for an elderly and fashionable woman of the world to digest ere she was but hardly from her bed !

Lady Kirwan pushed the paper towards Marjorie with trembling fingers.

"Read that," she said, in a voice quite unlike her usual tones of smooth and gracious self-possession.

Marjorie hurriedly scanned the columns of the paper.

"Oh, mother !" she said tearfully. "Isn't it too utterly dreadful for words ! How can Mary do such things ? Lluellyn's death must have turned her brain."

"Indeed, it is the only possible explanation, Marjorie," Lady Kirwan answered. "Poor Lluellyn's death and the strain of that dreadful hospital work. Fortunately, no one seems to have recognized her at the theatre. This preaching person attracted all the attention. But Mary must see a doctor at once. I shall send a little note round to Sir William this morning, asking him to come round. Now you saw the poor girl last night, dear. Tell me exactly what occurred. Omit nothing."

Marjorie launched into a full and breathless account of Mary's words and behaviour the night before. The girl was quite incapable of anything like a coherent and unprejudiced narrative, and her story only increased Lady Kirwan's wonder and distress.

"I tremble to think of the effect on your poor father's health," she said, when Marjorie had finished. "I have already been to his room this morning. He has

seen the papers, and is, of course, very upset. This man Joseph will, of course, have to be locked up. He is a dangerous lunatic. We have sent a message to Mary, and she is to meet us both in the library at ten o'clock. We mean to speak very seriously to her indeed. Perhaps you had better be there too. You have such influence with her, darling, and she is so fond of you."

At ten o'clock Mary went down into the library. She found her aunt, uncle, and cousin already there. Lady Kirwan kissed her with warm affection, and Mary saw that there were tears in her aunt's kind eyes. Sir Augustus could not rise from his chair, but as she kissed him she saw nothing but the most genuine and almost fatherly feeling was animating him.

A pang shot through the girl's sensitive heart. How kind and good they were to her—how she hated to wound and hurt them! Ah, if only she could make them see with her eyes!

"Now sit down, dear," Lady Kirwan said, "and let us talk over this business quietly and sensibly, *en famille*, in short."

Mary was greatly agitated. She sat down as she was told. All other thoughts but those induced by the ordeal which she was about to face left her mind.

Now, in the early morning, the upper servants of the Berkeley Square mansion were employed on various matters, and only a young footman was on duty in the hall.

It chanced that on this morning a raw lad from the country, who was being trained to London service, was the person who answered the front door.

Sir Augustus had cleared his throat and had just begun, "Now, in regard to this man Joseph, my dear

Mary," when the door of the library swung open, and the young footman, in a somewhat puzzled and frightened voice, announced—

"Sir Thomas Ducaine and Mr. Joseph, to see Miss Lys!"

CHAPTER XI

JOSEPH IN MAYFAIR

THERE was a dead silence in the great library. The morning sunshine poured into it, touching and refining the rich decorations with a glory which was greater than they. But no one spoke a word. It was a dramatic moment.

Then Mary spoke, and there was a rose-pink flush upon her cheeks.

"Oh, auntie," she said, "I am so very sorry! But I asked Sir Thomas Ducaine to come here and see me this morning. I meant to have told you. But when you and uncle sent for me here I forgot all about it."

"What does it matter if you did forget, dear?" she said to Mary. "Sir Thomas, how do you do? So glad to see you!"

"How do, Ducaine?" said Sir Augustus. "Sorry I can't get up; but this confounded gout still hangs round me. Can't quite get rid of it."

Mary saw, with a strange throb at her heart, that Ducaine's face had changed in some subtle way. She had not seen him for a fortnight or more, and she noticed the difference immediately, though she could hardly have defined it. But what was Joseph doing here? How came the Teacher to be with the man who loved her? Even as she asked herself the question

she knew the answer. What did *details* matter, after all? The Holy Ghost was leading and guiding. . . .

"I want you to know my friend Joseph, Lady Kirwan," Sir Thomas said. "Allow me to introduce him to you. Joseph—Lady Kirwan."

"How do you do, Mr. Joseph?" she answered. "This is quite an unexpected pleasure. Of course, we have all been hearing so much about you in the papers lately; and, of course, you were with my poor dear nephew when he died."

She gave him her hand with great graciousness, marvelling at the tall, erect figure, the serene power and beauty of the face, the wonderful magnetic eyes.

Joseph bowed.

"Thank you very much, Lady Kirwan," he said in the deep, musical voice which could rise to such heights of passion and pleading, or remain, as now, so perfectly modulated and strong. "I did not know Lluellyn for very long, but we were like brothers for a time, and he allowed me to see deep into his heart. I have never known a better man. I shall never meet with any one so good again, or so specially gifted and favoured by God."

Lady Kirwan was unable to repress a slight start of surprise. The man before her spoke and moved like an easy and polished gentleman. There was no possible doubt about it. And she had expected something so very different.

"Present me to your friend, Ducaine," Sir Augustus said from his arm-chair; and the Teacher shook hands with the great banker, and then at his invitation sat down beside him.

"Well, sir," the baronet said, "you have been making a pretty big stir in London, it seems. The

most talked-of person in England at this moment, I suppose."

Joseph smiled.

"Oh, that was inevitable!" he said. "I am sorry in a way, because I intensely dislike publicity that is merely curiosity. But I expect our backs are broad enough to bear it. And if only I can get people to listen, that is the great thing, after all."

"But about last night," Sir Augustus said. "Aren't you afraid of being arrested for making a disturbance? I've no doubt the play went a little too far, even for the Frivolity. But such very drastic methods, you know—well really, sir, if this sort of thing is allowed to continue—I mean no unkindness, believe me—society would be quite upset."

"I hope to upset it, Sir Augustus," Joseph answered with an absolute simplicity that robbed his words of either ostentation or offence. "No; they will take no action against me for what I did—of that I am quite certain."

"I by no means share your certainty," Sir Augustus answered. "Though I am sure, for your sake, and for the sake of my niece, who, I gather, somewhat foolishly accompanied you, I hope you're right. But I am a man of the world, you know, while you—if you will pardon me for saying so—hardly seem to be that."

"I was at the theatre last night," Sir Thomas Ducaïne broke in, "and I'm quite certain they will do nothing, Sir Augustus. They wouldn't dare. I saw everything that went on. You may take it from me that it will be all right."

"Well, you ought to know, my dear fellow," the banker said, obviously relieved at the words of the younger man. "And I do hope, Mr.—er—Joseph, that

you don't mean to visit any more theatres, except in a purely private capacity."

"I don't think we are likely to visit any more theatres," Ducaine said quietly.

Every one looked up quickly at the word "we." There was a mute interrogation upon every face.

Then there was a silence. Sir Augustus Kirwan was thinking rapidly and arriving at a decision. He had made his vast fortune, had gained his reputation and influence, by just this power of rapid, decisive thought, mingled with a shrewd intuition which all his life had served him well.

He saw at once that this man Joseph was no ordinary person. He had pictured him as some noisy, eloquent, and sincere Welsh peasant. He found him a gentleman in manner, and possessed of a personality so remarkable, a latent force so unmistakable, that in any assembly, wherever he went, he would be like a sword among kindling wood.

The newspapers of that morning had exaggerated nothing at all.

And then the man was obviously closely intimate with Sir Thomas Ducaine. Sir Augustus made up his mind.

"I am going to do a thing very much out of the ordinary," he said. "But this is not an ordinary occasion, however much some of us here would like it to be so. I am going to speak out, and I am going to ask some questions. I think you will admit that I have a right to ask them. My nephew by marriage, Lluellyn Lys, is dead. Lady Kirwan and I stand *in loco parentis* to our dear niece here, Mary Lys. She is of course, of age, and legally her own mistress. But there are moral obligations which are stronger than

legal ones. Very well, then. Mary, my dear girl, I want you to tell me why you asked Sir Thomas Ducaine to come here this morning. And did you ask Mr. Joseph here to accompany him?"

"I asked Sir Thomas to come, uncle," she said, "because I wanted to persuade him to meet Joseph. I wanted him to hear the truth as I have heard it. I wanted him to believe in Christ, and follow Him with us. I did not ask Joseph to come here. I did not know that he had ever met Sir Thomas."

Then Ducaine broke in.

"I think, Sir Augustus," he said, "that here I must make an explanation. Mary and I are old friends. We have known each other for a long time."

He paused, with an evident difficulty in continuing, nor did he see the swift glance which passed between Lady Kirwan and her husband—a glance full of surprise, meaning, and satisfaction, which said as plainly as possible, "this quite alters the position of affairs!"

Ducaine continued:—

"I hate speaking about it," he said, "but you have a right to know. I love her better than anything else in the world, and over and over again I have asked her to be my wife. She has always refused me. I have understood that such a great joy might be possible for me if I could believe as Mary believes. But I couldn't do so. I could not believe in Christ, and of course I could not pretend to accept Christianity in its full sense unless I was really convinced. It was no use trying to trick myself into a state of mind which my conscience would tell me was insincere. There the matter has rested until last night. Last night I was at the theatre, and saw Mary with Joseph. Afterwards, when I came out, I tried to find them every-

where, but they had vanished. I was in a terrible state of mind when I met, by chance, a friend of Joseph's—a Mr. Hampson—who came home to supper with me. Late that same evening I met, by a coincidence"—Joseph shook his head with a smile, but Ducaine did not notice him—"by a coincidence, I met Joseph. We have talked all night long, and I have come to this conclusion."

He paused, and, in the sunlight, Mary could see that little beads of perspiration stood out upon his brow. There was a dead silence in the room now, every ear was strained—one heart, at least, was beating rapidly.

"Yes?" Sir Augustus said.

"That I am going to throw in my lot with Joseph and his campaign," Sir Thomas replied. "My money, and such influence as I have, will be at his disposal. Now, I do this without any thought of what I hope to gain by it—the priceless treasure I hope to gain." He looked at Mary for the first time since he had begun to speak. "I am not yet convinced of the truth of Christianity. I do not, even after this momentous decision which I have taken, believe in Christ. But I want to believe, for the truth's own sake. One way or another the next few months will settle the question for me, and so I am going with Joseph."

Sir Augustus had listened to the young man with tightly shut lips. Nothing in his face showed what he thought.

Suddenly he turned to Joseph.

"Well, sir," he said, not without a kindly irony in his voice, "you may be quite sure that London will listen to you now. With Sir Thomas Ducaine's money and influence behind you, the path is smooth."

"It is God's will—blessed be His name!" Joseph answered quietly.

His voice was so humble and sincere, so full of gratitude and fervour, that even in the mind of the hard-headed man of the world no further doubt could possibly remain.

"Be that as it may," Sir Augustus said, after a pause. "I suppose you have some sort of a definite programme, sir?"

The grave answer rang like a bell in the room:—

"To succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation. To strengthen such as do stand; to comfort and help the weak-hearted; to raise up them that fall; to rebuke those that do evil in the sight of the Lord, and finally to beat down Satan under our feet."

Once more there was a silence.

"And you, Mary?" Sir Augustus asked suddenly.

"I mean to give my humble aid to this great work," Mary answered slowly. "Oh, don't oppose me, uncle—don't forbid me! It would make me so unhappy to do anything that you did not wish. But Jesus calls me—He calls all of us—His voice is ever in my ears."

"I propose," Sir Augustus said at length, "that you all go into another room and leave me here with my wife. I should like to discuss this with her for a few minutes."

When the two elder people were alone, their conference was brief and to the point.

"Of course, we shall withdraw all opposition," said Sir Augustus the worldly. "The thing has quite changed its aspect. This Joseph fellow is, of course, as mad as a hatter. But he is obviously a gentleman, and, at the same time, quite sincere—another Lluellyn,

in fact, though with a good deal more in him. Ducaine's accession to the movement makes all the difference. Joseph will become a fashionable fad, and all sorts of people will join him in search of a new sensation. I'm quite looking forward to it. London will be more amusing than it has been for years. Then it will all die a natural death, this Joseph will disappear, and Mary will marry Tom Ducaine, the biggest catch in London."

"It does seem as if Providence was in it, after all," said Lady Kirwan piously.

"No doubt, no doubt!" the banker answered jovially. "Just make the girl promise to make this house her home—she shall have perfect freedom to go and come as she pleases, of course—and everything will come right."

They had settled it to their mutual satisfaction, and were about to send for Mary, when the butler entered the library and announced that the Reverend Mr. Persse had called and asked for her ladyship.

Lady Kirwan was about to say that she was engaged, and could not see the clergyman, when Sir Augustus interposed. "I think I should see Mr. Persse, dear," he said. And then, when the man had gone: "We'll introduce him to this Joseph. It will be most amusing, and I want a little amusement, after being tied by the leg like this for nearly a fortnight. And besides, that humbug Persse will go and tell every one in Mayfair, and it will give the whole thing a *cachet* and a send-off! Don't say anything—leave it all to me."

Sir Augustus did not like The Hon. Mr. Persse, the fashionable clergyman of Mayfair, and it was with a somewhat sardonic smile that he welcomed him a moment afterwards.

The vicar of St. Elwyn's was a tall, clean-shaven priest, who would have been pompous had he not been so suave. His face was a smooth cream-colour, his eyes ingratiating, and perhaps a little furtive, while the mouth was mobile and clever. He occupied a somewhat peculiar position among the London clergy. He was an advanced Ritualist, inclining to many ceremonies that were purely Roman and Continental. But he had very little of the ascetic about him, and was as far removed from the patient, self-denying Anglican clergy of the slum districts in the East End, as four pounds of butter is from four o'clock. St. Elwyn's was one of the "smartest" congregations in London. The costly splendour of its ceremony, the perfection with which everything was done, attracted pleasure-loving people, who would go anywhere for a thrill that would act as the blow of a whip to jaded and enervated lives.

Mr. Persse "catered"—the word exactly describes his methods—for precisely that class of people whom he was so successful in attracting.

"How do you do, Lady Kirwan?" he said, in a pleasant and gentlemanly voice. "Ah, Sir Augustus, I hope you are better. It is a trying time of the year. I have called this morning on a somewhat singular errand. I was told, I must not say by whom, that he actually saw your niece, Miss Lys, in the theatre last night—you have read the papers this morning—yes?—in company with this extraordinary mountebank of whom every one is talking. Of course I denied it indignantly. I have met Miss Lys at your house, and I knew such a thing to be impossible. But my informant, is, I am sorry to say, a little prone to gossip and tittle-tattle, and I thought, in justice to you, that if I were armed with an authoritative denial, I

should be able to nip all such foolish gossip in the bud, before it has time to spread. You know how people talk, dear Lady Kirwan."

Lady Kirwan certainly knew—and so did Mr. Persse. He was the hero of many afternoon tea-tables, and an active disseminator of gossip.

"My dear Mr. Persse," Sir Augustus said somewhat emphatically, "allow me to tell you that you have been *quite* mistaken in your view of the new movement. The man whom the papers call Joseph is not at all what you think. Sir Thomas Ducaine, for example, is hand and glove with him. I must really correct your ideas on the point. If irregular, perhaps, the mission will be most influential."

"Oh, ah! I had no idea," said Mr. Persse, with remarkable mental agility. "Dear me, is that so, Sir Augustus? Anything that makes for good, of course, must be welcomed by all of us. I myself——"

"I will introduce you to Joseph," Sir Augustus interrupted, with intense internal enjoyment. "He happens to be in the house at this moment."

That afternoon all the evening papers contained an announcement that Joseph, the new evangelist, would preach at St. Elwyn's, Mayfair, after evening service on the morrow—which was Sunday.

What had happened was this.

Joseph had been duly introduced to Father Persse. The latter, in whom the instincts of the theatrical *entrepreneur* were very largely developed, saw his chance at once. Mayfair would have a sensation such as it had never enjoyed before.

Joseph had promised to preach without any more words than a simple assent. That there would probably be trouble with the bishop Mr. Persse knew very

well. But he was already out of favour in Episcopal quarters, and could hope for nothing in that direction. At the worst, an apology and a promise not to repeat the offence of asking a layman, who was unlicensed by the bishop, to preach in St. Elwyn's, would make everything right. He had made the actual request to Joseph privately, asking leave to have a few moments' conversation alone with him.

After obtaining the promise he went back to the library, where Mary and Sir Thomas Ducaine had returned, and announced his success.

But when they went to look for the Teacher he had disappeared. No one knew where he had gone, and neither Mary nor any of the others saw him again that day.

The West End of London waited with considerable excitement for what Sunday would bring forth.

CHAPTER XII

THE SERVICE AT ST. ELWYN'S

AT the moment when Joseph had met the Vicar of St. Elwyn's, he knew him for just what he was. The mysterious power which had enabled the teacher to lay bare the sins and secrets of the strangers in the theatre came to him then, and he saw deep through the envelope of flesh to the man's naked soul. Nothing was hidden from him. The meanness, the snobbery, the invincible absorption in a petty self, the hunger for notoriety and applause—all the layers and deposits of earthly stuff which overlaid the little undeveloped germ of good—these were plain to the spiritual vision of the man who was filled with the Holy Ghost.

The man's mind and its workings moved in his sight as a scientist sees the blood pulsing in the veins of an insect under the microscope. But directly Mr. Persse asked him to address the congregation of the fashionable West End church, Joseph knew that, whatever motives dictated the vicar's offer, the opportunity was from God. It was ordained that he should mount the pulpit and deliver the message that was within him.

He had slipped out of the mansion in Berkeley Square without bidding any of its inmates farewell. He had no wish to make mysterious entrances and exits. Indeed, he never thought about the matter at

all, but there was something within him that led and moved him, a force which he obeyed without question.

As he went out into the square, Joseph's heart was full of hope and thankfulness to God. God had led him to the door of Sir Thomas Ducaïne's house in Piccadilly. God had been with him during the still watches of the night as he pleaded and reasoned with the young man having great possessions. And God had prevailed ! All that had seemed so hopeless and insuperable during the dark hours after the scene in the theatre was over, was now lightened and smoothed away. In a few hours money and influence had come to him, and at a time when the sword of the Lord had but hardly left its sheath for the battle that was to be fought.

Joseph bent his steps at once towards the Euston Road. His faithful followers were there in the quiet hotel by the station. Ignorant of London, knowing nothing of what was going to happen, unaware of their leaders' plans or place, they waited, trusting in God. The thought quickened his steps. He longed to be with these trusting ones, to pray with them that God would be with him on the morrow.

Every now and again, as he walked, some one or other glanced curiously at him. The face of this or that passer-by would wear a look of curiosity and interrogation, and then, in several instances, the wonder changed into recognition, and the wayfarers felt almost sure that this must indeed be the very man with whose name all London was ringing. But no one followed him. No one could be quite sure of his identity, even though it was more than once suspected, and walking so swiftly as he did, he was far out of hail before any one could make up his mind to accost or follow him.

For his part Joseph heeded these significant signs

and tokens of the huge interest with which his personality was inspiring London very little. He had not seen the morning papers, though he knew from what he had heard in Berkeley Square that they were much occupied with his name and doings. That was to be expected, he knew. But he did not care to hear what they were saying of him. He walked through the streets of London, a man walking with God, holding high commune with the Eternal. But ere he met his brethren, he was to have a very practical illustration of London's excitement, and London was to have another sensation.

He had turned into the Euston Road, and was nearing the house which sheltered his disciples, when he saw that a huge crowd stood before it. The road was almost impassable for traffic, and a dozen stalwart policemen urged the thick mass of humanity to move in vain.

Every face was turned up to the dingy red-brick front of the hotel.

There may have been nearly a thousand people there, and the crowd was growing every moment, and every one was gazing up at the windows of the house.

The strange thing about the crowd was that it was an absolutely silent one. No one shouted or spoke, the thick clotted mass of humanity was motionless and orderly, though it refused to obey the orders of the police to disperse.

What had occurred was simple enough. The landlord of the hotel was interested from the first in the band of grave, silent men who had arrived at his house on the evening before. He had had but a few moments' conversation with Joseph, but the interview had powerfully affected him. Himself one of the sides-

men of a neighbouring church, an honest and God-fearing man, who ran his temperance hotel with conspicuous decency in a street renowned for its bad and unsavoury reputation, the landlord had read all about the strange mountain revival in Wales.

He identified his new guests immediately upon their arrival. It was impossible to mistake Joseph, that strange and mysterious being whose outward form resembled the very Christ Himself in such a marvellous and awe-inspiring fashion. When the band had bestowed their simple luggage in their rooms, and had left the hotel for the theatre under Joseph's guidance, the landlord, all agog with his news, went to the local Conservative Club, of which he was a member, and told it. Then had come the stupendous intelligence in the journals of that morning, and it had immediately got about—as news does get about, who shall say how or why?—that the headquarters of the evangelist were at a certain temperance hotel in that neighbourhood.

By half-past eleven, silently, swiftly, as if drawn by some unseen magnet, the people had collected in front of the house, and, even as Joseph drew near, journalists from all parts of Fleet Street, summoned by telephone and telegram, were hastening to the scene as fast as hansom cabs could bring them.

Joseph walked straight up to the edge of the tightly-packed mass of people. The way to the hotel door was entirely blocked, and he was at a loss how to approach it.

At length he touched a policeman upon the shoulder. The man's back was turned to him, and he also was staring at the window of the hotel in puzzled silence.

"My friend," Joseph said quietly, "do you think

you could make a way for me? I must get to the house. My friends are there."

Something in the deep, quiet voice startled the constable. He turned round with a rapid movement, involuntarily knocking off the Teacher's soft felt hat as he did so.

The big man's face grew pale with surprise, and then flushed up with excitement. He was a huge fellow, a tower of bone and muscle, but he seemed no taller than the man beside him, no more powerful than Joseph at the moment of their meeting.

The sun was still shining, and it fell upon the Teacher's face and form, lighting them up with almost Eastern definiteness and distinctness. But it was not only the sun which irradiated Joseph's face with an unearthly serenity and beauty. He had been communing with God. His thoughts were still on high. His face was not of this world. It was "as the face of an angel."

The man shouted out in a loud, high-pitched voice, which sent an immediate responsive quiver through the crowd.

"Make way!" he called. "Make way! He's come! Joseph has come!"

There was a sudden rustling sound, like the first murmur the upspringing wind makes in a forest. The crowd swayed and strained as every member of it turned, and Joseph saw a mass of stippled pink framed in black before him.

There was a deep organ note from many voices, interspersed here and there with sharp cries, falsetto, high in the palate, ejaculations of excitement, which could not be controlled.

Then every one saw him.

The deep note swelled into a great shout of welcome,

astonishment, and even fear, while, as the waters rolled back for the passage of Israel, the living billows of humanity separated and were cleaved asunder.

It was the triumph of a personality which, at this moment, was superhuman, a personality such as had never visited the modern Babel before. Good men and saints have oftentimes trodden, and still tread the streets of London, but never before had its weary, sin-worn people known the advent of one such as this man, an "angel" or "messenger" of warning straight from God!

It was a scene which recalled other scenes in the dim past. Human nature has not changed, though the conditions under which it manifests itself have changed. Steam and electricity, all the discoveries of science, all the increase of knowledge which they have produced, have had no real influence for change upon the human heart. Science does not limit, nor does knowledge destroy, the eternal truths of Christianity. This man, coming as he did, influenced as he was influenced, had the same power over a modern mob in London as he would have had in those ages which fools call "dark" or "superstitious"—not realizing that the revelation of God to man is still going on in perfect beauty and splendour, that day by day new proofs are added to the great Central Truth of the Incarnation.

They swept aside to let him pass, calling aloud upon his name, in anger, in supplication, in fear and in joy—a mighty multiple voice of men and women stirred to the very depths of being.

His bare head bowed, his face still shining with inward spiritual fire, Joseph passed among them, and was lost to their sight within the doors of the house.

He moved swiftly up the stairs, still as if in a dream in which worldly things had no part, with the rapt face of one who sees a vision still. Pushing open a door, he found himself by instinct, for no one had directed him, in the large upper chamber where the brethren were gathered together.

The room was a bare place, occasionally let for dinners and other social occasions, but ordinarily very little used. The dozen or so of the faithful friends who had come with Joseph from their native hills were kneeling at the chairs placed round the walls. One of them, David Owen, was praying aloud, in a deep fervent voice.

"Lord God of Hosts, we know how Thou didst anoint Our Lord with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. Anoint our Master Joseph in the same way, that he and we with him may prevail against the devils of London and their captain, Beelzebub. And oh, most Merciful Father, preserve our Teacher while he is away from us from the assaults of Satan and the craft and subtlety of evil men. Send him back to us with good news, and armed for the battle with Thy grace and protection. Dear Lord, Amen."

There was a deep groan of assent, and then a momentary silence broken by David, who said: "Brethren, I have it in my mind to read a portion of the Holy Book, this being the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. For it is therein that we shall remind ourselves of how the Apostles remained at Jerusalem waiting for the promise of the Father that ere many days passed they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost. And reading thus, we shall be comforted and of a stout heart."

With these words the old man rose, and, turning, saw Joseph standing among them. He gave a glad shout of surprise, and in a moment the Teacher was surrounded by the faces of his friends. They wrung him by the hand, they pressed on him with words of joy, the sonorous Welsh ejaculations of praise and thanksgiving rang like a carillon in the long, bare room.

The tears came into Joseph's eyes.

"My brethren," he said, and all marked the splendour of his countenance and the music of his voice, "God has richly blessed us, and shown us signs of His love and favour. Sit you down, and I will tell you my story and all that has happened to me. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

He told them everything, leaving out no single detail, and beginning his story from the moment on which he had left them the night before. Many were the exclamations of sympathy and comprehension as he told of the black doubts and fears that had haunted him upon this midnight walk. Like all men who have passed through deep spiritual experiences, they know such hours well. For all men who love God and try to serve Him must endure their agony and must be tempted in the desert places, even as Christ Jesus Who died for us was tempted.

The simple band of brethren heard with rapt attention how the Holy Spirit had led their chief into the dwellings of the rich and powerful, and raised up mighty help for the battle that was to come.

In all they saw the hand of God. Miracle had succeeded miracle from the very moment when they laid the body of their beloved Lluellyn Lys to rest upon the wild mountain top.

God was with them indeed!

It is not too much to say that during the remainder of the Saturday London was in an extraordinary ferment.

* * * * *

The time was one of great religious stagnation. It was as though, as the old chronicle of the Middle Ages once put it: "God and all his angels seemed as asleep." For months past a purely secular spirit had been abroad. Socialistic teachings had been widely heard, and the man in the street was told that here, and here only, was the real panacea for the ills of life to be found.

And now, at the very moment of this universal stagnation, Joseph had come to London.

There had suddenly arisen, with every circumstance of mystery and awe calculated to impress the popular mind, a tremendous personality, a revolutionary from God—as it seemed—a prophet calling man to repent, a being with strange powers, a lamp in which the fires of Pentecost burned anew, one who "spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus."

By dinner-time on the Saturday night all Mayfair knew that Joseph was to preach at St. Elwyn's on the evening of the morrow. The evening papers had announced the fact, and a series of notes had been sent round to various houses by the vicar and his assistant clergy.

St. Elwyn's was a large and imposing building, but its seating capacity was limited.

Mr. Persse was very well aware that the occasion he had provided would have filled Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's as well. The crowd was sure to be enormous. He therefore determined that admission to the service should be by ticket only, a perfectly un-

justifiable proceeding, of course, but one which would secure just the sort of congregation he wished to be impressed by his own activity and broad-mindedness. The tickets were hurriedly printed and issued, some of them were sent to the Press, the remainder to the wealthy and influential society people who were accustomed to "worship" at this church.

The service was fixed for eight o'clock. As a usual thing the Sunday evensong was but poorly attended at St. Elwyn's. The fashionable world didn't mind going to church on Sunday morning, and afterwards for "church parade" in Hyde Park, but one really couldn't be expected to go in the evening! The world was dining then—and dinner, was dinner!

Mr. Persse knew this, and he announced a "choral evensong" at eight, and "an address by the Evangelist Joseph" at nine. No one, owing to the fact of the numbered and reserved tickets, need necessarily attend the preliminary service. Every one could dine in peace and comfort and arrive in time for the sensation of the evening. Nothing could have been more pleasant and satisfactory.

The vicar, busy as he was with the necessary work of preparation, yet found time for a few moments of acute uneasiness. Nothing had been seen of Joseph. Would he come after all? Could he be depended upon, or would the whole thing prove a tremendous fiasco?

Late on the afternoon of the Saturday, Mr. Persse heard of the doings outside the hotel which had obviously occurred within an hour of Joseph's acceptance of the offer to preach and his mysterious departure from Berkeley Square. Immediately on reading this the vicar had dispatched his senior curate in his motor-brougham to make final arrangements with the Teacher about Sunday evening.

The young man, however, had returned with the news that Joseph and his companions had left the house by a back entrance during the afternoon, and that nothing was known of their whereabouts.

During the day of Sunday Mr. Persse, though he wore an expression of pious and sanctified expectation, found his uneasiness and alarm increase. He showed nothing of it at the luncheon party which he attended after morning service, and answered the excited inquiries of the other guests with suavity and aplomb. But as the hour of eight drew near and no word had been received from the Teacher, all the mean fears and worries that must ever be the portion of the popularity-hunter assailed him with disconcerting violence.

At eight o'clock that evening there was probably no more nervous and frightened man in the West End of London than this priest.

* * * * *

The stately ritual of evensong was over. The celebrated choir, in their scarlet cassocks and lace cottas, had filed away into the vestry, preceded by the great silver-gilt cross which Lady Kirwan had given to the church, and followed by the clergy in their copes and birettas.

A faint sweet smell of incense lingered about the great arched aisles, and an acolyte was putting out the candles on the High Altar with a long brass extinguisher.

It was a quarter before nine, and the church was filling rapidly. The vergers in their gowns of black velvet were showing the ticket-holders to their seats; on all sides were the rustle of silk, the gleam of jewels, breaths of faint, rare perfumes.

Mr. Persse always encouraged people to come to his

church in evening dress. He said, and quite rightly, that there was no possible reason why people who belonged to a class which changes its costume in the evening as a matter of course should be prevented from coming together to worship God by that circumstance.

Nevertheless, the sight was a curious one, in comparison with that seen at the same hour in most other churches. The women wore black lace mantillas over their elaborate coiffures—just as the poorer class do at church in Italy—but the sparkle of diamonds and the dull sheen of the pearls were but hardly veiled. Fans moved incessantly, and there was a continuous sound of whispering, like the wind in the reeds on the bank of a river.

Mr. Persse was in the inner vestry with his two curates. His face was pale, and little beads of perspiration were beginning to start out upon it.

"I don't know what we shall do, Nugent," he said to one of the young men; "this is dreadful. We can't wait very much longer. Nearly every one has come, the verger tells me. Every seat is occupied, and they are putting chairs in the aisles. There is an enormous crowd of ordinary people outside the church, and fifty policemen can hardly keep a way for the carriages. There has been nothing like it before; it is marvellous. And the man has never turned up! I don't know what to do."

"It's very awkward," Mr. Nugent answered—he was Sir Arbuthnot Nugent's second son, and a great pet in Park Lane and its environs—"and if the man does not come it will do St. Elwyn's a great deal of harm."

"It will indeed," the vicar answered, "and I don't mind telling you, Nugent, that I have had quite an in-

spiration concerning him. When I asked him to come here he assented at once. I felt—you know how one has these intuitions—that he was a man over whom I should have great influence. Now, why should I not induce him to take Holy Orders, and give him a title to St. Elwyn's? He is no mere ignorant peasant, as the general public seem to imagine. He is a gentleman, and, I am informed by Sir Thomas Duaine, took an excellent degree at Cambridge. The bishop would be glad to ordain him, I feel quite sure of it, and there can be no manner of doubt that he is a real spiritual force. Nor must we forget that God in His providence has ensured a most influential following for him. I have it on quite unimpeachable authority that Joseph is to be taken up by all the best people."

There was a knocking at the door which led into the small courtyard at the back of the church.

The vicar called out "Come in!" in a voice that rang with uncertainty and hope, and Joseph himself entered.

The Teacher was very pale and worn. His face was marked and lined as if he had quite recently passed through some rending and tearing experiences, some deep agony of the soul. So Jacob might have appeared after he had wrestled with the Angel of the Lord, or Holy Paul when at last the scales fell from his eyes, and he received sight forthwith and arose.

"Ah, here you are," Mr. Persse said in tones of immeasurable relief. "We had almost given you up! There is a very large congregation, and some of the most important people in London are here. I hope you are prepared!"

"God will give me words," Joseph answered quietly, though he did not look at the priest as he spoke.

"Oh, ah, yes!" Mr. Persse replied; "though, for my own part, I confess to anxious preparation of all my sermons. Have you a surplice and a cassock? No? Oh well then we can fit you out very well from the choir cupboard."

A surplice was found for him, the vicar knelt and said a prayer, and then the three men, the two priests and the evangelist, walked into the church.

There was a stir, a rustle, and then a dead silence.

Mr. Persse and the curate sat in their stalls, and Joseph ascended the stone steps to the pulpit, which was set high on the left side of the chancel arch.

He looked down from his high place upon the faces below. Row after row of faces met his eye. Nearly all the electric lights, save only those which gleamed on the pulpit ledge and illuminated a crucifix behind his head, were lowered. He saw a sheen of black and white, the dull glitter of jewels, and the innumerable faces.

Still standing, he lifted his hands high above his head, and in a loud voice cried upon God—

"Father, give me a tongue to speak to these Thy children. Lord Jesus guide me. Holy Ghost descend upon this church, and speak through the mouth of Thy servant."

The voice rang like a bugle through the arches, and echoed in the lofty roof.

And now the words of the text: "Oh, consider this, ye that forget God; lest I pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you."

The second terrible warning to London had begun.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONSPIRATORS OF ST. JOHN'S WOOD

AT precisely the same hour on the Sunday evening when Joseph ascended the pulpit of St. Elwyn's Church a large red Napier motor-car stopped before the gate of a smart little villa in St. John's Wood.

The villa stood in its own grounds, and was surrounded by a high wall. It had a general air of seclusion and retirement, though it was obviously the property or in the tenancy of people of wealth.

The wall was clean and newly pointed, the gate was painted a dark green, the short drive which led to the front door was made of the finest white marl.

The motor-car stopped, and two men descended from it, clearly defined in the radiance from two electric globes that were mounted on each pillar of the villa gate. Both wore opera hats, white scarves round their throats and black overcoats.

One was tall, slim, and clean-shaven. His age was about twenty-six, his hair was a pale golden colour, and his face, too young as yet to be permanently spoilt and damaged, nevertheless bore the unmistakable imprint of a fast life.

The young man, evil though his countenance was, conveyed a certain impression of birth and breeding.

His companion, on the other hand, was just as

unmistakably destitute of both. He was short and fat in figure. His face boasted a modicum of impudent good looks, and was of a strongly Hebraic cast. The fine dark eyes, the hooked nose, the large lips—red like a ripe plum—all shouted the prosperous Jew.

The younger man gave an order to the chauffeur. The automobile swung away towards Hampstead, and the companions walked up the approach to the villa, the door of which was opened to them by a servant.

They entered a small hall, luxuriously furnished in the Eastern style, and lit with shaded electric lamps. As they did so, a manservant hurried up to them from behind some heavy Moorish curtains.

"Where is your mistress?" said the younger of the two men.

"My mistress is in the drawing-room, my lord," the servant answered.

"Oh, all right! Take our coats. We will go and find her at once."

The servant took the coats and hats, and the two men walked down a wide-carpeted passage, brilliantly lit by globes in the roof, which made their stiff white shirt-fronts glitter like talc, and opened a heavy door of oak.

The villa was the home of Miss Mimi Addington, the leading musical comedy actress of London—the star of the Frivolity.

The young man with the light hair and the dissipated expression was Lord Ballina, an Irish viscount.

He had succeeded to the title some three years before, and to a very large fortune, which had come into the impoverished Irish family owing to a marriage with the daughter of a wealthy Liverpool manufacturer.

The short Jewish-looking man who accompanied him

was Mr. Andrew Levison, the theatrical *entrepreneur* and lessee of the Frivolity Theatre, in which Lord Ballina had invested several thousand pounds.

Lord Ballina opened the door of the room and entered, followed by Mr. Levison.

Upon one of the divans, wearing a long tea-gown of Indian red, Mimi Addington was lounging. Her face was very pale, and on this occasion quite destitute of the little artistic touches with which she was wont to embellish it. The expression was strained and angry, and the beautiful eyes shone with a hard, fierce glitter.

There had been no performance at the Frivolity Theatre on the night after Joseph's sudden appearance there.

Mimi Addington had been taken away in a state of wild and terrified hysteria. It was impossible for her to play upon the Saturday night, and her understudy, who should have sustained the part in the illness of her principal, had disappeared, and could not be found. Moreover, several other members of the cast had sent in their resignation, and many of the ticket offices of the West End of town had reported that the gilded gang of young men who were accustomed to take stalls for considerable portions of the run of a popular piece had withdrawn their applications.

"Well, Mimi, my dear," said Mr. Levison, with anxious geniality, "and how are you to-day?"

"Bad," the girl answered in one single bitter word.

Mr. Levison made a commiserating noise.

"Tut, tut!" he said; "you must try and bear up, Mimi, though I must own this abominable and unprecedented occurrence has been enough to try any one—this Joseph."

At the word the woman sprang from her couch with a swift feline movement of rage.

"Him!" she screamed, in a voice from which all the usual melody and sweetness had entirely departed. "If I had him here I'd murder him! No, that would be too good for him! I've thought of worse things than that to do!"

Lord Ballina went up to her and put his arm round her shoulder.

"And serve him right," he said; "but try and be quiet, Mimi, you'll only make yourself worse."

She pushed the young man roughly away, in a blaze of passion so lurid and terrible that it frightened the two men.

Lord Ballina looked helplessly at Levison for a moment. The elder man rose to the occasion.

"Let's get to business," he said; "something must be done."

The woman nodded eagerly and quickly, and with the same unnatural glitter in her eyes.

"Have you seen any of the papers?" Levison said. She shook her head.

"Well, Bally and I have been going through them, and, what's more, we have been seeing a whole lot of people, and getting various extra opinions. You know that I can say without boasting in the least that there are very few men in London who know the popular taste as I do. I've made my success by realizing exactly what London will do and think just a day or two before it has made up its own mind. I have never made a mistake. I won't bother you now with an account of how I have arrived at my present conclusion. It is enough to say that I am certain of it, and that it is this:

"There is not the slightest doubt that if this man Joseph continues in his pleasant little games—you see, I speak without heat—theatrical business in London will be ruined for months. There is going to be a great wave of religious enthusiasm all over the place. This man—Joseph he calls himself—is going to lead it. The man is an extraordinary one. He has a personality and a force greater, probably, than any living person in Europe to-day. There is no doubt about it. You, my dear Mimi, will have to forego your nightly triumphs. Public opinion will hound you off the stage and shut up my theatre, or compel me to let it as a mission-hall for ten pounds a night! As for you, Ballina, you will have to retire to your estates in Galway, and superintend the potato crop, and take an intelligent interest in the brood of the Irish national animal—the pig in short, Bally!"

Although he spoke jauntily enough, there was a deep vein of bitterness and sincerity underlying the Jew's words. He watched the faces of his two listeners with a quick and cunning scrutiny.

Mimi Addington spoke.

"You've hit the mark, Andrew," she said, in a low voice, in which there was a curious hissing quality—"you've hit the mark, as you always do. What you've said is perfectly true. I know it and feel it."

Her eyes blazed, and she put one white and shapely hand up to the ivory column of her throat, wrestling with the agony of hysteria and hate, which once more threatened to master her. With a great effort of will, she calmed herself, and went on speaking.

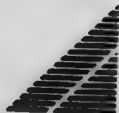
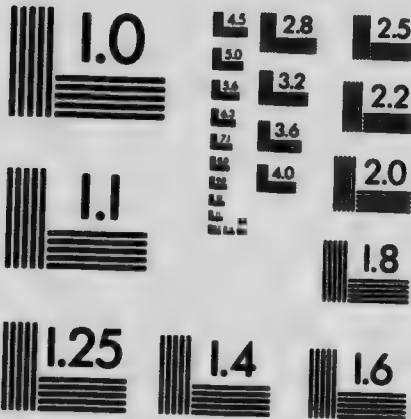
"But all this, Andrew, depends upon one little word 'if.'"

Lord Ballina looked quickly at Levison, with a



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glance which seemed to say that they had already arrived at precisely the same conclusion.

"That's it," he said; "there is always that little word 'if.'"

There was a dead silence in the little room, and three faces, pale and full of sinister purpose, sought each other in a horrid trio of hate.

The girl's face was as it had been from the first, unredeemed evil. The countenance of the young peer had changed from its usual vacuous and dissipated weakness into something which, bad as it was, had still a quality of strength. He had sat cowering in the theatre while the terrible denunciation of the evangelist had laid bare the secrets of his life. And although he did not outwardly show how hard he had been hit, his resentment was no less furious though less vulgarly expressed, than that of Mimi.

The Israelite gave no indication of his inward feelings. In truth, they were of a quite different nature from those of the other two. He lived for two purposes. One was to make money, the other was to enjoy himself; he saw now that his money-making was menaced, and that his enjoyment would be spoiled—unless——

Mimi Addington became suddenly quite calm and business-like. She realized that she was in perfect accord with the other two.

"Now let's get to work," she said. "This Joseph must be got rid of at once. It can be done, I suppose if we pay enough."

"Quite so," said Mr. Levison. "It now only remains to form ourselves into a committee of ways and means."

CHAPTER XIV

THE WARNING

LIKE a bell the preacher's voice rang through the crowded church.

After the delivery of the solemn and menacing text of warning, Joseph began, suddenly and swiftly, without any of the usual preliminary platitudes with which so many preachers in all the churches commence their addresses.

"I look down upon you and see you with an inward and spiritual vision. And to me, you men and women in your wealth, your temporal power, your beauty, your curiosity and your sin, seem as a vast Slough of Despond.

"I need no such fantastic images, powerful and skilful as they may be, by means of which Dante or Milton portrayed the horrors of hell, to show me a horror more real and terrible than any of which they wrote. This is the City of Dreadful Night. It is the Modern Babylon, where Christendom, corrupt both in state and in society, sits by many waters, and speaks in her heart, and boasts, 'I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.'

"Sin and Satan exercise a terrible dominion, ungodliness and debauchery accompany them, for Babylon is the abode of all unclean spirits.

"And in this church, you men and women to whom

I am speaking now represent in your very persons no small portion of the army of wickedness which rules London and fattens upon its corruption."

He paused for a moment, looking down from his high place with a pale face, burning eyes, and a hand outstretched in condemnation.

There was a soft, universal, and perceptible noise of movement, which rose and ceased. Then all was silent again. With their eyes fixed steadfastly on Joseph, no one had seen the vicar half rise from his seat in the chancel, with a scared look upon his face, and a sudden deprecatory movement of his arm.

The preacher resumed :—

" In a very short time—for some of you the time is shorter than you dream of—for to-night God has revealed much to me—you will all be dead. The feasting, and the folly, and the fun, and the lying and the drinking and the lust will all be over for you, and you will answer for what you have done.

" This is what I tell you to have constantly in your minds while I am speaking to you to-night. You may think in your blindness, in your folly, that I am exaggerating the evil of the time, the monstrous wickedness of London, for which you and people like you are largely responsible. Delude yourself with no such vain imagining, for I speak to you as the ambassador of the Most High God, and to-night you shall hear me.

" The signs of the time are unmistakable. London has come to the worship of the image of the beast, of the human spirit, which has apostatized from God, and made itself God. I have fallen into strong delusions, into which the Lord suffers all to fall who have not received the truth in the love of it, that they might be saved. You worship that which the inspired words

of the Bible call the 'beast' because it denies what is truly human, and, with all its culture and civilization, is more and more tending to degrade humanity.

"All who see with the eye of the Spirit know that atheistic and materialistic systems, denying God and the existence of the Spirit, and based upon a purely physical view of existence, and atheistic literature, which by its poetry, fictions, and romances, diffuses the Gospel of the flesh among the masses, grow daily, and are triumphant. The words of Revelation have come true, and out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the false prophet have proceeded the three unclean spirits, like frogs. These creatures of the swamp, the mire, and the morass are among you. Their croaking, powerless as it is in itself, yet produces a sound which penetrates, and is heard all around; repeating the same thing day after day, deluding men, and bringing them into the right state of mind for the service of Antichrist.

"You call yourselves Christians. You are here in a church, and the presence of most of you is the most grim and ghastly mockery that the finite mind can possibly conceive.

"Day by day in this holy temple of the Blessed Trinity God Incarnate comes down upon the altar yonder as the priest says the words of Consecration—those incredibly wonderful five words which put the Blessed Body of our Lord under the white species of the Host. Only this morning many of you heard those

*Jewels five words long
That on the outstretched forefinger of all time,
Sparkle for ever.*

Next Sunday, it may be, you will hear them again, as

you heard them last Sunday. Yet you live for evil pleasure still.

"When you think at all, you delude yourselves into imagining you are worshipping God, when you are taking a fitful interest in a ceremony which means no more to you than a ceremony. You come here for an hour in the morning of one day of the week, your minds full of worldly pleasures and the memories of your pleasant sins. You listen to the words of the Bible in your comfortable seats, and think how quaint, far off, and unreal they are. With a languid mental smile you hear of the devil and the evil spirits who walk up and down the City seeking whom they may devour. You would not smile if you were to take a short journey from this church into the devil's country, the East End of London—if now, with one accord, you were to drive in your carriages to those places where the air is heavy with ceaseless curses, where hideous disease and uncleanness that you cannot even imagine, stalk hand in hand with famine, despair, and unmentionable horrors of vice.

"You would believe then, perhaps, that the devil still goes about the streets of London doing his work.

"I tell you this without any possibility of mistake, that you are the servants of Satan, and that in your lives you have enrolled yourselves under the black banners of hell.

"And more especially than all, you are hypocrites. Outwardly all is fair and of good report until, as happens now and then, your lives are laid bare to the world in some hideous scandal. You go to church, your names are seen upon the lists of those societies which endeavour to ameliorate the life of the downtrodden and the oppressed. But what personal service do most

of you give to the cause of the God in whom you confess to believe? You live for pleasure, and you are hypocrites.

"Hypocrisy occurs in all the relations of your life; in the daily intercourse between man and man, when friendship is feigned; in the political sphere, when tyrants and self-seekers pretend a deep care for Fatherland, and thereby lead men according to their design. In art and science you are hypocrites, pretending a pure unselfish love to the higher ideal, when self-gratification is all you look for; incense is offered to the idols of the time, and pleasure is alone the end and aim, the Alpha and Omega of existence.

"You are as 'trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars.'

"And all around you London grows worse and worse, while it is from its corruption and from its misery that your sordid pleasures are distilled.

"There are men here to-night who have won fortune, rank, and celebrity from the wholesale poisoning of the poor. The food which the slaves of the modern Babylon eat, the drink they drink, is full of foulness, that you may fare sumptuously every day, that your wives may be covered with jewels. There are men here to-night who keep hundreds and thousands of their fellow-Christians in hideous and dreadful dens without hope, and for ever. In order that you may live in palaces, surrounded by all the beauties and splendours that the choicest art, the most skilled handicraft can give, hundreds of human beings who lurk in the holes for which they pay you must spend their lives, where no ordinary man or woman can remain for more than a moment or two, so terrible are these nauseous places.

"Whole miles of ground in the modern London are thickly packed with fellow-Christians who are hourly giving up their lives in one long torture that you may eat, drink and be merry. At midday you may go into the East End of London and pass a factory. Men come out of it dripping with perspiration, and that perspiration is green. The hair of these men sprouts green from the roots, giving them the appearance of some strange vegetable. These men are changed and dyed like this that your wives may spend the life-earnings of any one of them in the costly shops of the perruquiers in Bond Street.

"In order that you may draw twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty per cent. from your investments, instead of an honest return from the wealth with which God has entrusted you, there are men who eat like animals. In the little eating-houses around the works, there are human beings who leave their knives and forks unused and drop their heads and bury their noses and mouths into what is set before them. All the bones, nerves, and muscles below their wrists are used. These are the slaves of lead, who are transmuted with the sacrifice of their own lives, that it may be turned to gold to purchase your banquets. You are the people who directly or indirectly live in a luxury such as the world has never seen before, out of the wages of disease and death. Copper colic, hatter's shakers, diver's paralysis, shoemaker's chest, miller's itch, hammerman's palsy, potter's rot, shoddy fever, are the prices which others pay for your yachts and pictures, your horses and motor-cars, your music, your libraries, your clubs, your travel, and your health.

"And what of the other and more intimate side of your lives? Do you live with the most ordinary stan-

dard of family and personal purity before you? Do you spend a large portion of your lives in gambling, in the endeavour to gain money without working for it from people less skilful or fortunate than yourself? Do you reverence goodness and holiness when you find them or are told of them, or do you mock and sneer? Do you destroy your bodily health by over-indulgence in food, in wine, and in unnatural drugs, which destroy the mind and the moral sense? Do you ever and systematically seek the good and welfare of others, or do you live utterly and solely for yourself, even as the beasts that perish?"

The preacher stopped in one long pause; then his voice sank a full tone—

"Yes, all these things you do, and more, and God is not with you."

Nearly every head in the church was bent low as the flaming, scorching words of denunciation swept over them.

Wealthy, celebrated, high in the world's good favour as they were, none of these people had ever heard the terrible, naked truth about their lives before. Nor was it alone the denunciatory passion of the words and the bitter realization of the shameful truth which moved and influenced them so deeply. The personality of the Teacher, some quality in his voice which they had never yet heard in the voice of living man, the all-inspiring likeness to the most sacred figure the world has ever known, the intense vibrating quality of more than human power and conviction—all these united to light the fires of remorse in every heart, and to touch the soul with the cold fingers of fear.

Accustomed as most of them were to this or that piquant thrill or sensation—for were not their lives

passed in the endless quest of stimulating excitement ? —there was yet something in this occasion utterly alien to it, and different from anything they had ever known before.

Of what this quality consisted, of what it was composed, many of them there would have given conflicting and contradictory answers. All would have agreed in its presence.

Only a few, a very few, knew and recognized the truth, either with gladness and holy awe or with shrinking and guilty dread, the Power which enveloped them with the sense of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

There was a change in the accusing voice—

"But it is not yet too late. God's mercy is infinite, and through the merits of His Son you may save yourselves while there is time. Kneel now and pray silently as you have never prayed before, for I tell you that God is here among you. An opportunity will be given to each one of you to make reparation for the evil you have done, for the messengers of the Lord have come to London, and wondrous things will come to pass ! And now pray, pray, pray ! In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

With no further word the Teacher turned and quietly descended the pulpit steps.

Every head was bowed ; hardly a single person heard or saw him move away into the vestry, and a great silence fell upon the church.

As if in a dream, the tall figure in its white linen ephod passed through the outer vestry into the large and comfortable room used by the priests. No one was there, and Joseph sank upon his knees in prayer. He had been sending up his passionate supplications for the souls of those without but a few seconds, when

he felt a touch—a timid, hesitating touch—upon his shoulder.

He looked up, and saw a little elderly man, wearing the long velvet-trimmed gown which signalized a verger in St. Elwyn's, standing by his side. The old man's face was moving and working with strong emotion, and a strange blaze of eagerness shone in his eyes.

"Master," he said, "I heard it all, every word you said to them; and it is true—every word is bitter true. Master, there is one who has need of you, and in God's name I pray you to go with me."

"In God's name I will come with you, brother," Joseph answered gravely.

"Ay," the old man answered, "I felt my prayer would be answered, master." He took Joseph's surplice from him, divested himself of his own gown, and opened the vestry door. "You found this way when you came, master," he said. "The public do not know of it, for it goes through the big livery-stables. The district is so crowded. No one will see us when we leave the church, though there are still thousands of people waiting for you to pass in front. But my poor home is not far away."

As they walked, the old man told his story to Joseph. His son, a young fellow of eighteen or nineteen, had been employed as basement porter in the Countess of Morston's Regent Street shop for the selling of artistic, hand-wrought metal work.

Like many another fashionable woman in London, Lady Morston was making a large sum of money out of her commercial venture. But the repoussé work which she sold was made by half-starved and sweated work-people in the East End of town, and all the employés in the shop itself were miserably underpaid. From early

morning, sometimes till late at night, the old fellow's son had been at work carrying about the heavy crates of metal. His wages had been cut down to the lowest possible limit, and when he had asked for a rise he had been told that a hundred other young fellows would be glad to step into his shoes at any moment.

One day the inevitable collapse had come. He had found himself unable to continue the arduous labour, and had left the position. Almost immediately after his departure he had been attacked with a long and painful nervous complaint. Unable, owing to the fact of his resignation, to claim any compensation from the countess as a legal right, he had humbly petitioned for a little pecuniary help to tide him over his illness. This had been coldly refused, and the young man was now bedridden and a permanent encumbrance to the old man, who himself was unable to do anything but the lightest work.

Mr. Persse, on being applied to for assistance, had consulted the Countess of Morston, who was one of his parishioners, in order, as he said, to find out if it were "a genuine case." With an absolute disregard for truth, and in order to shield herself, the woman had told the clergyman that her late assistant was a dishonest scoundrel who merited no consideration whatever.

"And so, master," the old man concluded—"and so I lost all hope, and tried to make up my mind to see my lad die slowly. And then I see about you in the paper, and something comes into my mind like. And then the vicar he tells me about this here service to-night, and that you were coming yourself, master. So I prayed and I prayed that I should have a chance to speak to you. Master, I want you to raise Bill up and make him well."

The old man clutched Joseph by the arm, his cracked and pathetic voice full of poignant pleading.

"You will, won't you, master?" he said once more.

"Take me to the young man," Joseph answered.

CHAPTER XV

JOSEPH AND THE JOURNALIST

ERIC BLACK was thirty-three years of age, and one of the chief and most trusted writers upon the staff of the *Daily Wire*.

Very few of the younger school of journalists in London had the crisp touch and vivid sense of colour in words possessed by this writer. His rise to considerable success had been rapid, and his signed articles on current events were always read with extreme interest by the enormous public who bought the most popular journal of the day.

Eric Black's intellect was of first class order, but was one-sided. He saw all the practical and material affairs of life keenly, truly and well. But of that side of human existence which men can neither touch nor see he was profoundly ignorant, and as ignorance generally is, inclined to be frankly contemptuous.

In religious matters accordingly this brilliant young man might have been called an absolute "outsider." He never denied religion in any way, and very rarely thought about it at all. No one had ever heard him say that he did not believe in God, he simply ignored the whole question.

His personal life was singularly kindly, decent, and upright. He was, in short, though he had not the slightest suspicion of it himself, a man waiting for

ready for the apprehension of the truth—one of those to whom the Almighty reveals Himself late.

On a great daily paper, when some important event or series of events suddenly rises on the horizon of the news-world, a trusted member of the staff, together with such assistants as may be necessary, is placed in entire charge of the whole matter. Eric Black, accordingly, was deputed to "handle" the affair of Joseph and his epoch-making arrival in London.

Mr. Persse, the vicar of St. Elwyn's, had sent two tickets of admission for Joseph's address to the *Daily Wire*, and Eric Black, accompanied by a shorthand writer who was to take down the actual words of the sermon, sat in a front seat below the pulpit during the whole time of Joseph's terrible denunciation of modern society.

While the reporter close by bent over his note-book and fixed the Teacher's burning words upon the page, Black, his brain alert and eager, was busy in recording impressions of the whole strange and unexpected scene. He was certainly profoundly impressed with the dignity and importance of the occasion. He realized the emotions that were passing through the minds of the rich and celebrated people who filled the church. His eyes drank in the physical appearance of the Teacher, his ears told him that Joseph's voice was unique in all his experience of modern life.

Enormously interested and stirred as he was, Black was not, however, emotionally moved. The journalist must always and for ever be watchful and serene, never carried away—an acute recorder, but no more.

Towards the end of the sermon, when the young man saw that Joseph would only say a few more words, a sudden flash of inspiration came to him. No journalist

in London had yet succeeded in obtaining an interview or a definite statement from the extraordinary being who had appeared like a thunderbolt in its midst. It was the ambition of Eric Black to talk with the Teacher, and thus to supply the enterprising journal which employed him, and for which he worked with whole-hearted and enthusiastic loyalty, with an important and exclusive article.

He had noticed that the Teacher could not possibly have entered the church by the main entrance. The journalist himself, in order to secure the best possible seat, had arrived at St. Elwyn's at the commencement of the evening service which preceded the address.

With a keen, detective eye he had noted the little subtle signs of uneasiness upon the vicar's face, and had deduced accordingly that Joseph had not yet arrived. When the Teacher actually appeared, it was obvious that he must have come by the vestry door in order to elude the waiting crowd. It was morally certain also that he would leave by the same route.

The writer saw his chance. By his side was the representative of a rival paper, a drawback to the realization of his scheme. As his quick brain solved the difficulty of that, he remembered Mr. Kipling's maxim, that "all's fair in love, war, and journalism." The shorthand writer from the *Daily Wire* sat just beyond the rival journalist.

"Look here, Tillotson," he whispered, in tones which he knew the *Mercury* man could hear, "I'm feeling frightfully unwell. I must get out of this, if I can, for a minute or two. Of course, after the sermon is over Joseph will go down into the aisles. I hear that a reception is arranged for him at the west entrance. I am going to slip away for a minute or two. When t

preacher comes out of the vestry, fetch me at once. I mustn't let any of the other fellows get to him before I do. I shall be in the side-chapel over there, which is quite empty, and where the air will be cooler."

Satisfied that he had done all that was necessary to mislead his rival, Black slipped out of his seat, passed behind a massive pillar, and, unobserved by anyone, slipped into the outer vestry, through the inner, and eventually came out into the narrow passage which led to the livery stables, where he waited with anxious alertness.

In less than five minutes his patience and clever forestalling of events were richly rewarded. Joseph himself, accompanied by a little old man, whom Black recognized as the verger who had shown him to his seat, came out together, talking earnestly. They passed him, and when they had gone a few yards the journalist followed cautiously. He was anxious, in the first place, to discover where the mysterious man, whose appearances and disappearances were the talk of London, was going, and upon what errand. He waited his time to speak to him, resolved that nothing should now prevent him from bringing off a journalistic "scoop" of the first magnitude.

Joseph and the verger passed through the mews, and, turning to the right, entered one of those tiny, but well-defined slums which exist in the heart of the West End and are inhabited by the lowest in the ranks of the army that ministers to the pleasures of the great.

The newspaper man followed cautiously some four yards behind his quarry. In about three minutes Joseph and his companion stopped before the door of a small house, and the elder man felt in his pocket and produced the key to open it. Suddenly Joseph put

his hand upon the old man's shoulder for a moment and then, turning suddenly, walked straight up to Black.

"Brother," he said, "you are welcome, for God sent you to see what is to be done this night."

The confident young journalist was taken aback and for a moment all his readiness of manner left him.

"I—er—I—well, I represent the *Daily Wire*, you know, sir. I hoped that perhaps you would give me the pleasure of an interview. All London is waiting most anxiously to hear something of your views and plans. I should take it as a great favour if you could spare me a few minutes."

Joseph smiled kindly, and placed his hand upon the young man's shoulder, gazing steadily into his eyes with a deep, searching glance.

"Yes," he said, "it is as I knew. God has sent you here to-night, for you are as an empty vessel into which truth and the grace of the Holy Spirit shall be poured."

The journalist answered nothing. The extraordinary manner in which the Teacher had addressed him, the abnormal knowledge which the man with the beautiful suffering face and lamp-like eyes seemed to possess robbed the other of all power of speech.

And Black was conscious, also, of a strange electric thrill which ran through him when Joseph had placed his hand upon his shoulder. It was as though some force, some invisible, intangible essence or fluid, was being poured into him. Certainly, never before in his life had he experienced any such sensation. Still without a rejoinder, he followed the Teacher through the open door of the house, down a narrow and dirty passage, into a small bedroom lit by a single gas jet.

The place was scantily furnished, and grim poverty showed its traces in all the poor appointments of the room. Yet it was scrupulously clean and neat, and the air was faintly perfumed by a bunch of winter violets which stood upon a chair by the bed.

A young man, tall but terribly emaciated, was lying there. His face, worn by suffering, was of a simple and homely cast, though to the seeing eye resignation and patience gave it a certain beauty of its own.

"This is my Bill," said the old man, in a trembling voice—"this is my poor lad, master. Bill, my boy, this is the Master of whom we have been reading in the papers. This is Joseph the Teacher, and, if it is God's will, he is going to make you well."

The young man looked at Joseph with a white and startled face. Then he stretched out his thin and trembling hand towards him. His eyes closed as if in fear, and in a weak, quavering voice he said three words—

"Lord help me!"

Joseph bent over the bed, and placed his hand gently on the young man's forehead.

"Sleep," he said, in a low deep voice.

The two watchers saw a strange calmness steal over the patient's features. The convulsive movements of the poor, nerve-twitched body ceased, and, in a few moments more, quiet and regular breathing showed that the magnetic touch of the Teacher had indeed induced a tranquil slumber.

The old man looked on, shaking with anxiety.

"Master," he said, "can you cure him—can you heal him? He is my only son, all I've got left in the world—my only son!"

Eric Black, who had watched this curious scene with

great interest and a considerable amount of pity, sighing. He was not inexperienced in illnesses, especially the terrible nervous collapses for which medical science could do nothing, and to which there is one inevitable end. He knew that no human skill could do anything for the sleeping and corpse-like figure upon the bed, and he wondered why Joseph had cared to accompany the man and to buoy him up with false hopes.

Joseph did not immediately answer the old man's question about his son. Instead of that he turned quickly to the journalist.

"Yes," he said; "but with God all things are possible."

Black started violently. His very thoughts had been read instantly, and answered as swiftly. Then a furious resentment mounted in his brain against Joseph. Who was this man who sent a suffering invalid to sleep in a moment by his hypnotic touch; who brought terror, remorse, and shame into a great lighted theatre who dared to tell the wealthiest and most influential people in London that they marched beneath the standard of Beelzebub; who even now had read his secret thoughts with unerring intuition?

With a slight sneer, foreign to his usual nature, he was frightened, and was trying to reassure himself. He said—

"That is all very well, sir, no doubt; but miracles do not happen."

"Oh, yes, sir, they do—they do!" cried the verger, wringing his hands. "Oh, don't say that, miracles aren't over yet. I don't like the way you say it, sir. God will surely never let my poor Brother die."

Joseph took no notice of the poor old fellow's entreaties. He spoke to Black.

"My brother," he said, "and what is a miracle?"

Black thought for a moment, and then replied, though he did not know it, in the words of Hume: "A miracle," he said, "is a violation of the laws of Nature, and therefore impossible—Huxley showed that long ago."

The journalist was quite unconscious of the progress of modern thought, and in his ignorance believed that Huxley was the last word in philosophic criticism.

"Huxley," Joseph answered, quietly, "has said that if a miracle, such as the restoring to life of a dead man, were actually to take place, the phenomenon would simply become a problem for further scientific investigation. That is perfectly true as far as it goes, nor does it in any way discredit the possibility of a miracle. Is it not a fact that every day new natural laws, previously entirely unsuspected by anyone, are being discovered? Have not the papers of late been full of strange news of great chemical discoveries, such as radium—electrical wonders, such as the sending of messages without wires? What are these but natural laws? But would they not have been miracles three hundred years ago?"

"Supposing we admit the Divine regulation of the world by natural law, the spiritual nature of man, and his value to God. Let us say that in the exercise of his free will man has disturbed the poise and balance of the moral universe by sin, and that God proposes to restore it. If we do this, there can be no improbability in our mind that God supplements, or even in a manner reverses, the working of natural law by a fresh revelation of His will and character. Have you ever seen or known of a case in which a man or woman full of bitter hatred of God, and stained by a life of con-

tinuous sin, has been sud' lenly changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and has become from henceforward a righteous and Christian man? You must have come across such cases—they are common enough in the experience of every one. Is not this a miracle? Is not this a revelation of Our Lord Jesus Christ?

"And if Jesus Christ be the bearer of this new revelation, may we not regard His miracles as the spontaneous, even natural, expressions of His Personality? Miracles are thus perfectly credible to any one who believes in two things—the love of God and the existence of sin."

The journalist bowed without replying. His keen and logical mind saw at once the force of Joseph's quiet argument. He was not prepared to answer the Teacher. Nevertheless, there was still a certain sense of stubbornness and revolt within his mind.

This was all very well, but it was, after all, mere abstract philosophical discussion. It did not affect the matter in hand, which was that the Teacher was buoying up a poor and unhappy old man with fruitless hopes.

When he had finished speaking to Black, Joseph turned to the old verger. "Come, my brother," he said, "and let us kneel by the bedside of the old man who is sick, praying that the Holy Spirit may come down upon us and heal him."

Then Eric Black, standing against the opposite wall of the little room, saw the two men kneel down, and saw also the marvel which it was to be his privilege to give to the knowledge of the whole world, and which was to utterly change his own life from that moment until its end.

There was a long silence, and then suddenly t

journalist began to be aware that, in some way or other, the whole aspect of the room was altered.

It was incredibly, wonderfully altered, and yet *materially* it was just the same.

The young man had known nothing like it in all his life experience, though he was to know it again many times, when in the future he should kneel at the Eucharist.

Neither then, nor at any other time, was Black able to explain his sensations and impressions at that supreme moment. With all his brilliant and graphic power, to the end of his days the power of describing the awe and reverence, the absolute certainty of the Divine Presence which he experienced at the Mass, was denied him. Celebrated as he became as a writer, his attempts to give the world his own testimony to the Truth in a convincing way always failed. It was the great sorrow of his career. He would have counted it as his highest privilege. But he bore his cross meekly till the end, knowing that it was sent him for a wise purpose, and that perhaps it was his punishment for his long days of hard-heartedness and blindness.

He began to tremble a little, and then he saw that Joseph's hands were placed lightly upon the temples of the sleeping man, just touching them with the long, nervous finger-tips.

The Teacher may have remained motionless in this position for five or ten minutes—the journalist never knew—and all the time the power and unseen influence grew and grew in the silence, until the very walls of the little room seemed to melt and dissolve beyond the bounds of sense, and the brain, mind, and soul of the watcher to grow and dissolve with them in one overpowering ecstasy of reverence and awe.

And then the next thing that Eric Black knew was that the tall thin figure which had lain upon the bed was standing in the middle of the room, robed in its long, grey flannel gown, and that the old man had leaped at his son with loud cries of joy and wonder, and that the two men, locked in each other's embrace, were weeping and calling out in gratitude upon God.

Joseph took the journalist by the arm, and led him, unresisting, from that awful and sacred scene.

They were out in the quiet back street, and the young man was swaying as if he would fall. He felt an arm pass through his, and heard the deep, vibrating voice of the teacher speaking.

"Come swiftly with me, for we have to meet a great company of people in another place, and to witness the marvellous ways of God."

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CHAPTER XVI

THE BATTLE OF THE LORD

AMONG the audience, or rather the congregation, which had assembled to hear Joseph in St. Elwyn's Church, all those people who were intimately connected with him had been present.

It had been arranged beforehand, although Mr. Persse had known nothing of it, that Joseph's followers, Sir Augustus and Lady Kirwan, Marjorie, and Mary, accompanied by Sir Thomas Ducaine and Hampson, the journalist, should all have seats reserved for them by ticket in the church.

Accordingly they had all been there. After the Teacher's solemn exhortation to private prayer, the whole congregation had awoke as if from a dream. The influence, the magnetic influence of Joseph's presence, was removed. Every one sat up in their places with grave and tired eyes, wearing the aspect of people who had come back to life after a sojourn in that strange country of the soul which lies between this world and the next.

The vicar, very pale and agitated, had descended from the chancel in his surplice and biretta, and had gone among the people, whispering here and there, frowning, faintly smiling, and only too obviously upset and frightened in body, mind, and spirit.

Over all the great congregation of wealthy and

fashionable people there had lain that same manner of uneasiness, that hidden influence of fear. After a few minutes the majority of them rose and went silently from the church. As they walked down the broad and lighted aisle it was obvious enough, both in their walk and in their faces, that they were trying to call back their self-respect and that mental attitude which ruled their lives, and was but an insolent defiance of all claims upon conduct, save only the imperial insistence of their own self-will.

But it was an attempt, and nothing more, upon the part of those who thronged and hurried to be quit of the sacred building in which, for the first time in their lives, a man inspired by God had told them the truth about themselves.

Nevertheless, a considerable residue of people was left. They sat in their seats, whispering brokenly to each other, glancing at the vicar, and especially at two pews where a company of countrymen in black were still kneeling with their heads bowed in prayer.

It had already been bruited about in society that Sir Augustus and Lady Kirwan, together with Sir Thomas Ducaïne, were intimately connected with the Teacher. The regard and attention of those who still stayed in the church were, therefore, also directed to the pew which held the baronet, his wife, and their daughter. Sir Thomas, the beautiful girl in the costume of a hospital nurse who was recognized by some of them as the niece of Lady Kirwan, and a little, meagre-looking man whom no one knew—Hampson, the editor of the *Sunday Friend*, in fact.

Mr. Persse seemed oddly ill at ease. He was unable to answer the queries which were constantly addressed to him, but his embarrassment was presently relieved

Sir Thomas Ducaine, followed by Mary Lys, rose from his seat and went round about among the people.

"If you will come to my house," Sir Thomas whispered to this or that friend; "if you care to come, of course, Joseph is to be there to meet us all at eleven o'clock. He will make the first pronouncement as to what he intends to do, as to why he has come to London, and of the message which the future holds."

* * * * *

On Sunday night, about half-past ten, the squares and the street thoroughfares of the West End of London are not thronged. The exodus of the crowds from the East End which takes place earlier every evening, so that the poor may catch a single holiday glimpse of those more fortunate, is by that time over and done with.

The rats have gone back to their holes, and the spacious streets of the wealthy are clear and empty, save only for the swift and silent carriages of those who have supper parties, to end and alleviate the dulness of the first day of the week in town.

The walk from Mayfair to Piccadilly is not a long one, and Joseph, with his companion, met few wayfarers as they walked swiftly among the swept and lighted streets, wound in and out among the palaces of the West End.

Eric Black strode by the side of the Teacher with never a word. His heart was beating within him like sudden drums at midnight. His mind and thoughts were swirling in multitudinous sensations. What he had seen he had seen, and what to make of it he did not know. Where he was going, he was going, and what new marvel he was about to experience he was unable to conceive or guess.

Yet, as he moved swiftly towards the house of Sir Thomas Ducaine, he knew in a strange, sub-conscious fashion, that all his life was altered, all his ideas of the future were overthrown.

Something had come into the life of the brilliant young man, something had fallen upon him like a sword—it would never be the same any more!

Meanwhile, as he walked with Joseph, he walked with a man who warmed his whole being with awe and reverence. Speculation ceased within him. He was content to be taken where the other would—dominated, captive, and glad.

And in his mental vision there still remained the vivid memory of the miracle which he had seen—the piercing cries of joy and thankfulness, the picture of the poor old man and his recovered son, drowned all other thought within him!

He felt, as Moses must have felt on Sinai, the rapture and fear of one who has been very near to God.

They came to the door of the house in Piccadilly.

A row of carriages lined the pavement, and the butler was standing in the hall, surrounded by his satellites. The door was half ajar, held by a footman, and as the two men entered there was a sudden stir and movement of the people who were expectant there.

Sir Thomas Ducaine, who had been talking earnestly and in a low voice to Mary Lys, came forward quickly as the two men entered.

His face was charged with a great reverence and affection as he took Joseph by both hands.

"Master," he said, "welcome! We are all waiting for you."

Then he turned inquiringly to Eric Black. Joseph interpreted the look.

"This is a brother," he said, "who will be very strong in the Lord. He is a strong and tempered blade which has for long rested in the scabbard. Our Blessed Lord has come to him this night."

The twenty or thirty people who had been waiting round the great hall now come forward in a group. With the exception of Joseph's friend Hampson, there was not a single person there who was not important in one way or another in English life. Here was a well-known and popular King's Counsel, his keen, clean-shaven face all alight with interest and wonder. By his side was a prominent society actress, a great artiste, as far removed from the Mimi Addington type as light is from darkness. There were tears in the great grey eyes, and the sensitive mouth was quivering with emotion. A young peer, an intimate friend of Sir Thomas Ducaine, a group of well-known society women, a popular Mayfair doctor, a middle-aged baronet, who was one of the Court officials at Buckingham Palace—of such materials was the advance band of people composed.

Along the other side of the hall, in strange contrast to these fashionable and beautifully-dressed people, the faithful band of Welsh miners and quarrymen was standing in their black coats, talking earnestly and quietly together.

They turned also as the Master entered.

Then David Owen took three or four steps in front of his companions and raised his gnarled old brown hands high above his head.

"Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord," he cried, "and who is filled with the Holy Spirit!"

Then he turned suddenly to his companions, and

with a wave of his arm started the "Veni Creator Spiritus"—

*Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God,
Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son ;
The God of peace and love.*

*Visit our minds, into our hearts
Thy heavenly grace inspire ;
That truth and godliness we may
Pursue with full desire.*

*Thou art the Comforter
In grief and all distress ;
The heavenly gift of God Most High,
No tongue can it express.*

*The fountain and the living spring
Of joy celestial ;
The fire so bright, the love so sweet,
The Unction spiritual.*

A glorious burst of deep and moving harmony filled the great hall, and thundered away up in the dome above as the Welshmen caught up the old hymn.

None of the other people there had ever heard anything like this in their lives. All this melody and wild beauty, which is the heritage of the country which produces the most perfect chorus singers in the world, were mingled with a spiritual fervour so intense and a love and rapture so ecstatic, a purpose so invincible and strong, that souls and hearts were moved as they had never been moved before.

The organ voices ceased suddenly, as a symphony played on some great orchestra ceases without a single dropping note.

Then every one saw that the Master's hand was raised in blessing. He seemed suddenly grown taller. His face shone with heavenly radiance, he was more than

human in that moment, his whole body was like some thin, transparent shell which throbbed and pulsed with Divine fire.

"The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always."

The words of blessing fell upon hearts and souls long dry and arid, atrophied by the things of this world, like the blessed rain of heaven upon the thirsting fields. Worldly ambitions, hopes, thoughts and preoccupations, shrivelled up and disappeared. A deep penitence flowed over those dry spaces like a river. Sorrows for the past, resolution for the future, the glory and awe of worship, came upon them all in the supreme moment.

While they were looking at the Teacher with rapt attention they saw him suddenly drop his arm, which fell heavily to his side like a dead thing.

The light faded from his face, the thin, blue-veined lids fell over the shining eyes, the mouth dropped a little, with a long sigh, and Joseph fell backwards in a deep swoon.

The man who but a moment before realized for them the absolute visual picture of Christ Himself, as He may have looked on one of those great moments of tenderness and triumph which star the Holy Gospel with the radiance of their recital, was now, indeed, a visible picture in his own body of the "Man of Sorrows Who was acquainted with grief," The Redeemer Who fell by the way.

Sir Thomas and Hampson were standing by the Teacher as he fell, and it was their arms which received the swooning form, carried it into an inner room, and laid it gently upon a couch.

But it was Mary, tall, grave and unutterably lovely in her healing ministry, who chafed the cold, thin hand, wiped the damp moisture from the pale and suffering brow, and called back life into the frail and exhausted vessel of God.

While the Teacher was being tended by his friend Sir Thomas had given orders to the butler to take the other guests into the large dining-room, where there was some supper waiting for them.

Every one assembled in the great, rich room, with its Jacobean carvings and family portraits by Gainsborough and Reynolds.

But nobody ate anything, or sat down at the long gleaming table. One and another took a sandwich, but every one was too expectant and highly-strung to think of food in the ordinary way.

Probably for the first time in the lives of the society people there, they felt a real brotherhood and equality with the rugged sons of toil. The cultured accents of Park Lane mingled with the rougher-voices of the Master's disciples. Distinguished and famous men walked with their hands upon the shoulders of the peasants from Wales. Beautiful women in all the splendour of dress and jewels hung upon the words of some poor servant of God whose whole worldly possessions were not worth twelve inches of the lace upon their gowns.

It was an extraordinary scene of absolute, uncalculating love and brotherhood. As in the very earliest Christian time, the mighty and the humble were one more one and equal, loving and beloved in the light which streamed from the Cross on which the Saviour of them all had died in agony that they might live eternally.

There was no single trace of embarrassment among Joseph's followers. They answered the eager questioning of the others with quiet and simple dignity. The marvellous story of Lluellyn Lys was told once more with a far greater fulness of detail than the public Press had ever been able to give to the world. The miracles which had taken place upon the wild hills of Wales were recited to the eager ears of those who had only heard of them through garbled and sensational reports.

During the half-hour all the London folk were put in possession of the whole facts of Joseph's mission and its origin.

Probably never before in the social history of England had the force and power of the Christian faith been so wonderfully and practically manifested as at this moment. Degrees, dignities, rank, wealth, and power were all swept away, and ceased utterly to exist. The Divine love had come down upon this company in full and overflowing measure, and a joy which none of them had known before, and which seemed indeed a very foretaste of the heavenly joy to come, was with them all.

Sir Thomas Ducaine came into the room.

"Friends," he said, "the Master has recovered and asks you to pray and talk with him upon this great and happy night. He is waiting for you all in the ball-room upstairs. Will you come with me?"

The young baronet led the way. They followed him out of the dining-room, through the hall in which the liveried servants stood about with awe-struck faces, up the wide marble staircase with its crimson carpet, and into the vast room, lit by a thousand lights, which gleamed in the mirrors with which the walls

were lined, and were reflected again in the smooth and shiny parquet floor.

And in the midst of all these splendours, seated upon a chair at one end of the room, they saw the dark-robed figure of the Master, with a sweet and gentle smile upon his face.

Without a word they grouped themselves round him and, still smiling on them in love and brotherhood, Joseph began to speak.

"My dear brothers and sisters," he said quietly, "you have come here to-night from the church where I spoke as the Spirit of God compelled me to speak. The words that I said were there given to me, and to many of the congregation they must have seemed harsh and cruel. But out of all that congregation you have chosen to be with me to-night, and I pray and believe that a new life is to begin for all of you, even as it began for me no long time ago.

"I am going to ask you now how, and in what measure, each of you is going to live for Christ Jesus. Think about your past life and think about your future life in this world! God has given to all of you great powers and opportunities. In the ranks of this world you are set high. I and my companions have come from the hills of Wales, led by God, our band captained by the Holy Ghost, to wake this great and sinful city from its sloth and evil. By the blessing of the Holy Trinity you are assembled here to-night under the roof of a young man who is very rich and powerful in England. By the direct operation of the Paraclete that young man is being led to the Truth, and has thrown in his lot with the servants of God. At the beginning of our battle we are thus provided with money and influence, and all the weapons with which God in His

Divine wisdom makes it necessary for His servants to use.

"What are you, also, going to do for Jesus?"

There was a silence for a full minute when Joseph had made an end of speaking.

Then, quite suddenly, a strong, clear, and confident voice rang out in the great ball-room.

Eric Black, the journalist, was speaking.

"Sir Thomas Ducaine, Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, "I am not one of you. I am a writer for the Press, and, I may say, a writer who is successful and whose words are read by very many people. I have never before to-night thought much about religion, nor have I loved God or tried to serve Him. But from now, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I vow and pledge myself to write nothing that is untrue; nothing which shall not, in intention and effort, redound to the glory of God. With such power as in me lies, I enlist under the banner of this man, which I verily, truly and honestly believe to be the banner of Jesus. And there is one thing more that I must say. I beg you will excuse my presumption, and listen patiently to me for a moment, for I have a wonderful thing to tell you."

Then, in crisp, vivid sentences, full of colour and movement, he told the listening company of the miracle of healing he had just witnessed in the West End slum.

He spoke as he wrote, keenly and directly, with the technical power of producing an actual picture in the hearer's or the reader's brain.

While he was telling his experience Joseph's eyes were half closed. His hands were resting upon the arms of his chair, and he was quite motionless.

When he had finished, the keen-faced King's Counsel

began to speak in a somewhat hard and metallic voice, though with force and determination in every note of it.

"For my part," he said, "without any further preamble I will say just this. I will never again defend a cause in the courts in which I do not believe. I will give up all the methods and intrigues by which I have hoped to secure a judgeship. I will no longer court a political party in whose policy I do not really believe in order that I may gain a prize. And when I am not exercising my profession and doing the duty to which God has called me, in an honest and Christian fashion, I will spend a right proportion of my wealth and time in helping Joseph to alleviate the sorrows and miseries of the poor, and to bring London back to Jesus Christ!"

The silence which ensued after the great lawyer, in his brusque and determined fashion, had made his confession of faith, was broken by a voice which was like water falling into water.

The great actress was speaking, gently and humbly.

"For my part," she said, "I can do little, oh, so very little. But I have enough money to live on quietly, and there will still be some to spare for the poor people. I will act no more. My art, such as it is, has been well thought of in this world. But I am sure now that I cannot go on playing. There is so much more to do for God. And, perhaps, I do not yet know, because I have not thought it out, it may not be good in the sight of Heaven that I should continue in my profession. That is what I will do, Master."

Young Lord Ashbury, Sir Thomas Ducaine's friend, began to mumble and stutter. He was a short, thick-set young fellow, with a clean-shaven, pleasant, but not particularly intellectual countenance.

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"I—er—really, I don't quite know, but I—well, it's difficult to say, don't you know! At any rate, I'll do what I can. Old Tommy Ducaine is a good lead, and I haven't done all I ought to do—not by a very long way. But I will if I can. If I can help the poor Johnnies Joseph talks about, I jolly well will. That's all!"

Very red in the face, the Earl of Ashbury subsided into silence.

The night wore on, and many hearts were laid bare, many natures opened themselves before the Teacher.

It was close upon dawn when the last carriage rolled away, and the door opened to let the latest guest out into Piccadilly.

The battle of the Lord was begun. People were flocking to the enlistment. The standard of Jesus was raised in the Babylon of our time.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONSPIRATORS

MR. ANDREW LEVISON, the lessee and proprietor of the Frivolity Theatre, sat in his private office, which led out of the foyer, one damp and foggy afternoon, a fortnight after Joseph's now famous sermon at St. Elwyn's.

Since that momentous occasion, much water had run under the bridge.

Joseph and his companions had become the question of the hour. What, in the first instance, had been mere excitement and surmise, was now an accepted and revolutionary fact. Except by hearsay, London in reality was divided into two camps—those who were for, and those who were against the Teacher.

And the hostile party was infinitely greater than the friendly one.

In the first instance, the attitude of the religious bodies were extremely varied.

Mr. Persse himself, whose church had become suddenly emptied of its congregation, and whose personal prestige had suffered an irremediable injury, headed a most virulent and persistent antagonism.

But the really fine brains and spiritual natures in the Anglican Church—including those noble men who live the lives of paupers among paupers, and work like galley-slaves—were much more friendly. They noticed that the Teacher made no personal assump-

tions. He did not say that those whose sins he remitted were cleansed. He baptized none ; he called himself an ambassador, but not a priest of God.

That, in His inscrutable providence, the Father had richly endowed this man with the Holy Spirit, that he did indeed walk under the direct guidance of God, seemed to these good men impossible to doubt. They were, despite the certain restrictions of thought to which their training and temperament inclined them, ready to believe that because the advent of one directly inspired by the Holy Ghost in the sense with which the Apostle Paul was inspired was outside their personal experience, it was not to be rejected upon that account.

As far as in them lay, in the measure of their opportunities and possibilities, they held out the welcoming hand.

But, as was inevitable, it was the Free Sects who were in the front of the Teacher's army—as far as definitely Christian people went.

During the last few days of the fortnight which had intervened between the present moment and the sermon in St. Elwyn's, Dissent, with the exception of the Unitarians, had spoken in no uncertain way in favour of Joseph's mission. They saw, with a singular unanimity, that here was a deeply spiritual revival of religion upon true evangelical lines. Here was a greater than Wesley even, a force and a personality which could not be explained away by any accusations of charlatanism or self-interest, a man with a personal magnetism, a power over the human soul, a power even over the material things of life which was verily without precedent or likeness since the times of the holy apostles themselves !

That much of his teaching was definitely Catholic in tone, that he sent people to the true channels of grace—the Sacraments of the Church—did not alienate them as it might have done in another. It was now known that in his youth Joseph was a baptized and confirmed member of the Church of England, that he in no way repudiated it nor stood outside it, that he constantly received the Blessed Sacrament. But Nonconformity was not hostile.

The word "miracle," so long derided and discredited by the materialists and scientists who denied the immanence of God in all things, was now once more in the air.

The whole of England was awaking to the realization of strange new happenings. Men who had never thought or spoken of such things before now talked in low voices, one with the other, of the Holy Ghost. "God is a Spirit"—once more men said this to each other.

The healing of the verger's son was known to all the world. It was a fact beyond possibility of doubt, more authenticated and certain, more easily capable of proof than any of the Roman Catholic wonders of Lourdes or Treves. The colder analysis of the Anglo-Saxon temperament had been brought to bear upon the event. Evidence was weighed and sorted as the impulsive, emotional Latin temperament is incapable of doing.

And, in the event, even the most sceptical were forced to admit that there was no doubt at all.

The thing had really happened!

Eric Black had put it upon record. His vivid and powerful description had touched the heart of the nation. Then it was the turn of the investigators,

and they had been unable to discover a single flaw in the sequence of cause, operation, and effect.

It was said also, and hinted everywhere, that a certain famous family had brought an afflicted daughter to the Teacher. Nothing was known definitely, but the generally believed story was this :—

The Lady Hermione ——— was the third daughter of the Duke of ———. The family, one of the most famous in the historical annals of England, was still rich in power and wealth. But it was a physical ruin. Sons and daughters for the last three generations had been born feeble in brain and stunted in body.

A mysterious taint was on the ancient house, that Nemesis for past grandeur that Thackeray has drawn for us in the picture of the Marquis of Steyne in *Vanity Fair* :

The young and lovely lady had been seized with a mysterious and incurable disease of the mind. She had disappeared from society. It was said that her condition was terrible ; that at times even the doctors and nurses who watched over her impenetrable seclusion shrunk back from her in fear.

It was as though she was possessed of an evil spirit —so the tale had long been whispered.

And now it was abroad and upon the lips of every one that the poor living body inhabited by some evil thing had been brought to the Teacher, and that all was once more well with the maid—the soul returned, health and simplicity her portion once more.

These things had made a most lasting and powerful impression upon the public mind. Who Joseph was, what were the reality and extent of his powers, what was to be the outcome of his mission : these were the questions of the day, and all the world was asking them.

The non-religious world sneered. The majority in "Christian" England was also divided in unequal portions. Most people said that Joseph was a marvellous trickster and cheat—a cheat and impostor such as England had probably never seen before, but still a rogue of rogues.

But among the last and poorest sections of the London community a very different opinion obtained.

They didn't know anything about religious matters, they cared still less. "God" was a word which gave point and freedom to an oath. The churches were places in which one was adjured to give up even the miserable pleasures which made life possible to be endured. The Bible was the little black Book you kissed in the police courts.

But Joseph was a friend.

Great things were going to happen in the congested districts of the lost. A material Saviour seemed to have risen up. A man who rebuked the rich and powerful, who poured words of fire upon the tyrant and the oppressor, had come to London. There was help then! A light was to dawn in the sky, there was a little patch of hope in the sombre environment of lost and degraded lives.

Joseph and his brethren were coming to help!

So all London was stirred to its depths.

Vested interests were threatened in innumerable ways, a revolution in public thought and sentiment was imminent, in some way or other, for all classes of society; things were going to be changed.

Things were going to be changed.

And, whether it knew it or not, the modern Babylon was in the throes of a spiritual revolution.

The Holy Ghost brooded over the waters.



Mr. Andrew Levison sat in his private office at the Frivolity Theatre.

It was a richly furnished and comfortable place.

The walls were decorated with large photographs of the popular actors and actresses of the day. A heavy Turkey carpet covered the floor, a great writing-table of carved oak was littered with papers, electric lights in little silver shells glowed here and there; it was the luxury of a business room.

Andrew Levison's theatre had remained closed since the night when Joseph had first appeared in London and denounced the place. The attendance at many other theatres of the same class was dwindling enormously. It was exactly as the shrewd Jew had foreseen—the advent of the evangelist bade fair to ruin, or, at any rate, terribly embarrass, his unscrupulous enterprises.

He sat in his big armchair of green leather and smiled. A light yellow-coloured cigar was between his firm white teeth. He drummed gently upon the writing-table with fat white fingers. No more happy-looking and prosperous person, at peace with the world and with himself, could have been seen anywhere—upon the surface.

It is a great mistake to imagine that the most evil passions of the heart show themselves in the face. Criminals, with the exception of those unhappy people who live *continuously* by crime, are no monsters in aspect. Your murderer is, as often as not, a mild and pleasant-looking man. Mr. Levison looked what he was—a good-natured, shrewd and money-loving Hebrew,

no more. Yet, as he sat there, he was planning murder and waiting the arrival of an assassin !

It is always thus, though many people have neither sufficient imagination nor knowledge of life to realize it. A man may be a panderer like Levison, or a robber like any successful rascal in the City, and yet he may still be a kind husband and father and a generous friend.

The Son of God, Who hung upon the shameful tree of Calvary, knew this.

"This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise" was not said idly. Man is made in God's image, however marred and defaced the Divine imprint may be.

It is well to remember this sometimes, though it is fatal to allow our appreciation of its truth to make us kind to sin or tolerant of it. But may we not hope that no single son or daughter of God is ever entirely lost ?

The theatrical manager's secretary, a pale and tired-looking girl, who took down his letters in shorthand and typed them upon her machine, knocked at the door and entered.

"Oh, Miss Campbell, what is it ?" Levison said, making a pretence of looking up from a pile of papers.

"A man has come," the girl said, "who tells me that he is one of the supers in the last play. There is another man with him, and he says that he thinks you will see him. His name is Harris, and he states that he is one of the regular people here."

"Well, that's nothing to do with me," Levison answered. "They ought to see the stage-manager. He looks after all those things. However, you may tell them to come in. I suppose they're hard up, and want a shilling or two ? I shan't disappoint them, I dare say."

He smiled, a flashing, good-humoured smile of strong white teeth ; and the girl went out, thinking that under a brusque exterior her employer had a heart of gold, after all.

In a moment or two more the carefully arranged comedy was over, the door of the office was carefully closed, and two seedy-looking, clean-shaven men stood in front of Mr. Levison's writing-table.

"This is my pal, Mr. Levison," one of the men said, in a hoarse and furtive voice.

He spoke softly and in the way of one who shared a confidential secret.

Levison looked the other man up and down with a keen and comprehensive regard. The fellow was shorter and stouter than his companion. His face was like a mask. It betrayed nothing whatever, although its obvious concealment of what lay behind—the real man, in short—was rather sinister. The light, red-flint eyes kept flickering and shifting from side to side, and that was the only betrayal of uneasiness apparent.

"What's your name?" Levison said ; and then, with a sudden wave of his hand, he corrected himself. "No, I don't want to know your name, after all. That matters nothing to me. But what I am going to ask you is just this : Has Harris explained to you what you are going to be paid to do?"

"'E 'ave, gov'nor," said the man.

"He's told you exactly?"

The fellow nodded, without further waste of words.

"Very well, then," Levison answered—"then there is no need of any explanations on my part. At the same time, I will say just this : A certain person has got to be put out of the way. That you already

understand. But there need not necessarily be anything more than that. An injury that would incapacitate the person we know of, would put him on the shelf for a long time, would be quite enough."

The man smiled. The whole ghastly immobility of the mask was suddenly transformed into a hideous and mocking countenance. The tool of the arch criminal betrayed his superiority to scruple, and in that moment the hired assassin was contemptuous of the greater scoundrel and the weaker man.

"As you like, gov'nor," he said, in a low, oily voice. "It's all one to me and my pals—give you my word. There's lots of ways of putting a cove through it wivout doin' of 'im in entirely like. But the whole thing's just as easy."

Levison, whose face had suddenly grown very white, made him an impatient and terrified movement with his hand.

It was one thing to call up one of the foul creeping things of London, it was quite another to hear hideousness voicing horror in a quiet and accustomed room.

"I want to hear nothing at all!" he said, in a high-pitched and unsteady voice. "Don't tell me! Don't tell me! I don't want to know!"

Once more the assassin smiled—dreadfully.

"Very well, gov'nor," he whispered. "That's all O.K. Leave it to me, and it'll be safe as 'ouses. Day after ter-morrer this 'ere Joseph is going down into Whitechapel wiv a lot of 'is swell pals. Sort of explanatory tour, it is. 'E's a-goin' to show them 'ow the pore live. Tike 'em over the rookeries and preach the Gospel. We'll 'ave lots of chances, and no one won't know 'oo done it. It's a question of terms, that's all. You're a gen'leman, you are, sir; and Mr. 'Arris 'ere,

an old pal of the boys, is a gen'leman, too. Guv'nor, what are you a-going to hoffer ? "

Levison's hand trembled as 'he opened a drawer of the big writing-table.

He withdrew ten sovereigns in gold.

" Take this," he said, " and when the thing is done, I'll give you twenty more of the same. Harris will give them to you from me. And now, for God's sake, get out of my sight ! "

The last words burst from him in a high, almost feminine note, and as the two men shuffled away into the fog of the empty foyer, the fat, white hand of the Jew went up to his throat, clutching at it in sick hysteria.

" In the name of God, get out of my sight ! "

Was there ever a more blasphemous parody and mockery than this ? He who taketh the name of the Lord God in vain——

CHAPTER XVIII

REVEALED IN A VISION

MARY LYS stood in the great hall of the East End Hospital, where she had worked for three years. She was saying good-bye.

A little group of men and women stood round her—the men mostly young, clean-shaven, alert, and capable in expression; the women in the uniform of hospital nurses.

Some of the women were crying quietly, and the great visiting surgeon, Sir Abraham Jones himself, alternately tugged at his grey, pointed beard or polished the glasses of his pince-nez.

"Well, nurse," said the great man, "I must go. I am due in the operating theatre. I am sure that you are only representing the thought of the whole hospital staff when I say how deeply we all regret that you are leaving us. You have—ahem!—endeared yourself to every one, and your work has been splendid. You have been a pattern to your colleagues in every way. I hope that in the new sphere of life you have chosen you will be happy and prosperous."

Sir Abraham was not an orator in ordinary life, though he had been known to rise to real eloquence when lecturing upon some of the obscurer forms of appendicitis. But the short, jerky sentences came from him

heart as he shook the hand of the beautiful girl who, like himself, was a soldier in the noble army of those who fight disease and death.

They all crowded round Mary. The nurses kissed her, the young doctors wrung her by the hand and tried to express something of their feelings.

Men and women, they all loved and valued her, and every one knew that when she went out through the great doors for the last time they would all suffer a loss which could never be replaced.

It was over at last. No longer in her nurses' dress, but clothed in the ordinary tailor-made coat and skirt that young ladies wear in London during the mornings, Mary got into the waiting hansom cab. The driver shook the reins, the horse lurched into a trot, there was a vision of waving hands and kindly faces, and then the long, grimy façade of the hospital slid past the window and was lost to view.

Mary Lys was no longer a hospital nurse.

As she drove westward—for she was on her way to her aunt's house in Berkeley Square, where she was about to make her home for a time—she reviewed her past life, with its many memories, bitter and sweet. It had been a hard and difficult life—a life of unceasing work among gloomy and often terrible surroundings. And moreover, she was not a girl who was insensible to the beauty and softer sides of life. Culture, luxury, and repose were all hers did she but care to speak one word to Lady Kirwan. She was constantly implored to leave the work she had set herself to do.

She had always refused, and now, as she looked back on the past years, she knew that she had been right, that her character was now fixed and immovable, that the long effort and self-control of the past had given

her a steadfastness and strength such as are the portion and attributes of few women.

And as the cab moved slowly up the Strand, Mary Lys thanked God for this. Humbly and thankfully she realized that she was now a better instrument than before, a more finely-tempered sword with which to fight the battle of Christ.

For though Mary was to live beneath the roof of Sir Augustus Kirwan, she was not going to live the social life—the life of pleasure and excitement as her cousin Marjorie did. Mary had left the hospital for one definite purpose—that she might join the army of Joseph and give her whole time to the great work which the evangelist was inaugurating in London.

Joseph and his brethren had now definitely taken up their abode in a large house in Bloomsbury which Sir Thomas Ducaine had given them to be the headquarters of their mission. Workers of all classes were flocking there, and Mary knew, without possibility of doubt, that she was called to the work. Every fibre of her spiritual nature told her the truth. From the first she had been mysteriously connected with the movement. The supernormal chain of events, the long succession of occurrences that were little less than miraculous, told their own tale. In common with all those people who had anything to do with Joseph, and who were about to join him, Mary was sure that she was being directly guided by the Holy Ghost.

She thought of her dead brother, the strange, prophetic-like figure of the mountain and the mist, the real beginner of it all, the man who had taken the empty brain and soul of Joseph himself, and as it were, through his own death, by some strange psychical law unknown to us, poured the Spirit of God into them as into a vessel.

Mary knew that Lluellyn was aware of her determination, and that he approved it. There were few people who drew more comfort or believed more heartily in the glorious truth of the Communion of Saints than Mary Lys.

She felt that Jesus Christ had conquered death, that our loved ones are with us still, and the time of waiting is short before we shall see them once again.

She did not know how near she was to another special manifestation of God's grace and power, for, saint-like and humble as were the pious maids and matrons, who listened to the teachings of Our Lord and ministered to Him, she did not realize the growth of her own soul and how near to the great veil her life of purity and sacrifice had brought her.

The cab passed out of the Strand into Trafalgar Square, and, the traffic being less congested, began to roll along at a smarter pace than before.

But Mary noticed nothing of her surroundings as the vehicle turned into Pall Mall. From the sweet and tender memory of her dead brother her thoughts had now fallen upon one who was becoming increasingly dear to her, but one for whom she still prayed—and over whom she mourned—unceasingly.

From the very first Mary had been strongly attracted by Sir Thomas Ducaine. Even in the past, when she had definitely refused to listen to his suit, she had known that she was upon the brink of something more than mere affection for him. He was strong, his life was clean, his heart kindly and unspoiled.

But she had restrained herself with the admirable self-control which her life of sacrifice had taught her; she had put the first beginnings and promptings of love away.

He did not believe, he could not believe. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost were incredible to him. He would not pretend. He would not seek to win her by a lie, but the Holy Trinity meant nothing at all to him.

But then Joseph had come. The Teacher had influenced the rich and famous young man, so that he had given him everything. Without having realized in its essential essence, the truth of Joseph's mission and the Divine guidance the Teacher enjoyed, Sir Thomas had nevertheless changed his whole way of life for him.

"Father, teach him of Thyself. Lord Jesus, reveal Thyself to him. Holy Spirit, descend upon him." Thus Mary prayed as she was being driven out of her old life into the new.

It was about one o'clock when the cab stopped at Sir Augustus Kirwan's house in Berkeley Square.

"My lady and Miss Marjorie told me to tell you, miss," the butler said, as he greeted Mary, "that they are both very sorry indeed that they cannot be here to welcome you. They would have done so if they possibly could. But my lady is lunching at Marlborough House, Miss Mary. Sir Augustus is in the City."

The man handed her on to a footman, who conducted her up the great staircase, at the head of which Mrs. Summers, Lady Kirwan's maid, and confidential factotum, was waiting.

The good woman's face was one broad grin of welcome. Summers was in the confidence of her mistress, and had long known of the efforts made by the baronet and his wife to induce Miss Lys to give up her work at the hospital and take up her residence in Berkeley Square.

Only that morning Lady Kirwan had said, "Everything is really turning out quite well, after all, Summers, though, of course, one could not see it at first. The arrival of this eccentric Joseph person has really been a blessing in disguise. Sir Thomas Ducaine is more devoted to Miss Mary than ever, since they are both mixed up in this mission affair. We shall see everything come right before very long."

"Your rooms are prepared, miss," said Summers. "Bryce has told you why m'lady and Miss Marjorie couldn't be home to welcome you. But I'll send some lunch up at once to your boudoir. And there's a letter come this morning. Sir Thomas' valet brought it himself. I've put it on your writing-table, miss."

There was a world of meaning and kindly innuendo in the woman's voice as she ushered Mary into the luxurious suite of rooms which had been made ready for her.

But the girl noticed nothing of it. Her thoughts were in far distant places.

Nothing could have been more dainty and beautiful than the rooms which were to be hers.

The most loving care had been lavished on them by her aunt and cousin. One of the head men from Warings had been there on that very morning to put the finishing touches.

Mary's eyes took in all the comfort and elegance, but her brain did not respond to their message. She was still thinking of and praying for the man who loved her and whom she loved, but the man who had not yet—despite all his marvellous generosity—bowed his head and murmured, "I believe."

Then she saw his letter upon the writing-table—the firm, strong handwriting, with the p-stroke "d"

and the Greek "e," which denote a public school and University training.

Her heart throbbed as she took up the square envelope and opened it.

This is what she read—

"Lady Kirwan has told me you are coming to them to-day. I want to see you most particularly. I bring you a message from Joseph, and I bring you news of myself. At four o'clock I will call, and please see me. Dearest and best,

"THOMAS SHOLTO DUCAINE."

She smiled at the signature. Tom always signed his full name, even in the most intimate letters. It was a trick, a habit he always had. For the moment Mary was like any other girl who dwells fondly on some one or other little peculiarity of the man she loves—making him in some subtle way more than ever her own.

Mary lunched alone. Her luxurious surroundings seemed to strike an alien note. She was not as yet at home in them, though when the meal was over she drew up her chair to the glowing fire with a certain sense of physical ease and enjoyment.

In truth, she was very tired. The strongly emotional incidents of her farewell at the hospital, the concentration of nervous force during her drive to Berkeley Square, had left her exhausted for the moment. She was glad of the comfortable silence, the red glow from the cedar logs upon the hearth, and, as the afternoon lengthened into the early dusk of a London fog, she sighed herself to sleep.

Death has been defined as the cessation from correspondence with environment—a logical and scientific

statement which, while it is perfectly accurate, still leaves room for every article of the Christian faith. Sleep, in a sense, is this also: and we have the authority of Holy Writ itself that many revelations have come to the dreamer of dreams.

Mary lay back in her armchair, and the dewy loveliness of her face would, in its perfection, have shown no trace of what was passing in her sub-conscious mind to an onlooker. But all her life was being unfolded to her in a strange panorama as she slept. From first to last everything that had ever happened to her was unwound as if from the spool of Fate itself. She saw all the events of her life as if she were standing apart from them and they were another's. But, more than all this, she saw also, in a dread and mysterious revelation, the purpose, the controlling purpose of God, which had brought these events about.

It was as though she was vouchsafed a glimpse into the working of the Divine mind; as if all the operations of God's providence, as they had been connected with her past, were now suddenly made clear.

On some dark and mysterious fabric, half seen and but little understood, the real pattern had flashed out—clear, vivid, and unmistakable, while the golden threads that went through warp and woof were plain at last.

On and on went the strange procession of events, until she found herself upon the lonely mountain-tops of Wales. Her dead brother was there, and praying for her. She heard his passionate, appealing voice, she saw with his very mind itself. Joseph was there also, and Mary began to understand something of the miracle that had made the Teacher what he was, that had changed him as Saul was changed.

And at this moment the colour of the dream began to be less real and vivid, while its panoramic movement was greatly accelerated.

She was as though suddenly removed to a great distance, and saw all things with a blurred vision as the present approached. Then her sensations entirely changed. She no longer saw pictures of the past explained for her in the light of a supernormal knowledge. All that was over. Her whole heart and mind were filled with the sense of some strange presence which was coming nearer and nearer—nearer and nearer still.

Then, quite suddenly and plainly, she saw that the figure of Lluellyn Lys was standing in the centre of the room, clear and luminous. The figure was that of her dead brother as she had last seen him, and seemed perfectly substantial and real. It was seen in the darkness by an aurora of pale light that seemed to emanate from it, as if the flesh—if flesh indeed it was—exhaled an atmosphere of light.

Mary fell upon her knees. "Brother—brother!" she cried, stretching out her hands in supplication. "Dear brother, speak to me? Tell me why you are here from the grave!"

There was no answer in words. The face of the figure grew much brighter than the rest, and the weeping imploring girl saw upon it a peace so perfect, a joy so serene and high, a beatitude so unspeakable, that her sobs and moans died away into silence as she gazed at the transfigured countenance in breathless awe and wonder.

For the face was as the face of one who had seen God and walked the streets of Paradise.

It smiled upon her with ineffable tenderness and

greeting, and then she saw that one arm was raised in blessing. For some seconds the figure remained there, motionless. Then with a slight movement, though no sound accompanied it, the luminous outline turned towards the door. The right arm still remained in its attitude of blessing, the left pointed to the portal.

There was a sound of footsteps outside in the passage, the figure began to sway and shake, precisely as a column of vapour shakes in a wind. It grew fainter and more faint, and as Mary tried to clasp it, calling aloud on it to stay, it vanished utterly away. She was awake now, and for some reason she could not explain she rushed to the wall and turned on the switch of the electric light. In a second the room was illuminated. It was just the same in its ordered daintiness and comfort. Nothing was altered, there was nothing whatever to show that any ghostly visitor had been there.

There was a knock at the door.

Sir Thomas Ducaine entered, and there was something upon his face which sent the blood leaping through Mary's veins once more in the shock of a sudden revelation.

She knew now why her brother had come to her in her vision! Sir Thomas entered the room, and came straight up to Mary.

"My dear," he said, "I asked especially to see you alone because I have something to tell you. Lady Kirwan knows; she gave me permission to come. Mary, can you guess what I have to say?"

The light upon his face had told her even before he spoke; the ghostly visitor had told her; her heart had told her.

"I think I know," she said. "I think that my prayers are answered."

He caught her by both hands, and looked steadily into her eyes.

"My love," he said, in a voice that trembled with emotion, try how he would to control it, "I have come to tell you just that."

Her face did not change. It bore the traces of the supernatural experiences through which she had passed; there was a rapt ecstasy in the eyes, the lovely lips spoke of love, belief, hope. Her face did not change, but it already wore the look he had longed to see upon it. She had never seemed more beautiful. "It has been a gradual process, Mary," he continued, speaking quickly and nervously. "But it has been quickened at the last. And I owe it all, absolutely and utterly, to Joseph. The night that Joseph came into my life, when I saw him at the theatre, and when I found him standing on the steps of my house late on the same night, was the beginning of everything for me. All life is changed. I look upon it in a new way. I see it with fresh eyes. I believe in God, I know that Jesus died for me, I know that the Holy Ghost is immanent in this world—I believe!"

"I knew it," she said in a low voice. "I knew it directly you entered the room. God sent a messenger in a dream to tell me."

"He has us in His care," the young man said reverently. "But I have much to tell you, Mary. Do not tire yourself."

He led her to a large ottoman, which came out at right angles to the Dutch fireplace, and sat down by her side. He had released her hands now, and by an intuition she knew his motive. He would not

speak to her of love until he had told her the whole history of his conversion, the dawn of his belief, his acceptance of Christ !

He wanted her to be sure, to understand the change in him to the full, and he would take nothing until it was fairly due !

He was indeed a true and gallant gentleman, Mary thought, as she heard the grave young voice and saw the firelight playing upon the strong, clean-cut profile.

She had been attracted to him from the first. No one had ever stirred her as he had done. Liking and powerful attraction had grown into love, strong, steadfast, and sure.

But there had always been that great and terrible barrier between them. She could not give herself to an infidel. For that was what it meant, ugly and harsh as the word was. He did not really and truly believe there was a God. He was an atheist and infidel, even as Joseph himself had been.

And now, and now ! It was all over, God had spoken and revealed Himself to the blind, ignorant heart !

The man was speaking. Thomas was telling her of how this marvel had come about.

" It was not only Joseph's great magnetic powers, the marvellous way in which he can stir one, that influenced me. A great orator is not necessarily a Christian ; the personal force which hypnotizes and directs the thoughts and movements of a crowd is not necessarily derived from belief. I recognized, of course, that I had come in contact with a personality that was probably unique in the modern world. I saw it at once, I was dominated by it ; I put my money and influence at Joseph's disposal because I was per-

fectly certain of his goodness and his power for good. I knew that I was doing right. But that, after all, was not accepting the Christian faith. Even the miraculous things that I have seen him do, or know of his having done, did not in themselves convince me Natural causes might account for them. They might be produced by powers superior in intensity, but not different in kind, to those latent in all of us."

Mary listened carefully to the grave and reasoned statement. Every now and then there was a little break and trembling in the young man's voice, telling of the hidden fire beneath the veneer of self-control. The lovely girl who listened half smiled with love and tenderness once or twice.

"And what was it really, dear, in the end, that brought you to the foot of the Cross?" she said gently.

At the word "dear" he started violently, and made a quick movement towards her. His face was flushed with joy, his eyes shone.

Then, with a great effort, he restrained himself. She could see how his hands were clenched, could hear how his breathing came fast from his parted lips.

"It was the simplest and yet the most wonderful thing possible," he said. "I had been thinking about these questions for months. I read theology. I went to the churches and chapels of every sect, and, as you know, I couldn't believe. I know the reason now. I wanted to believe in order that we might be closer together, you and I, love of my heart. I did not want to believe because my heart was touched, and I loved God! Then Joseph came into my life, and more and more I tried. But it was still of no use.

"But I think my heart must have been softened

insensibly by being in daily contact with a nature so saintly and a personality so much in communion with the Unseen as Joseph is. A little time ago, as I was reading the Gospel of St. John, one night, just before I went to bed, a sudden revolution took place in all my feelings and desires. These were the words—

“ ‘And after eight days again’ His disciples were within, and Thomas was with them ; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

“ ‘Then saith He to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side ; and be not faithless, but believing.

“ ‘And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.’ And when I read those words, Mary, they seemed to come straight to my heart, to be spoken to me, Thomas Ducaïne. I saw, for the first time, the long, frightful agony upon the Cross. I knew, as I had never known before, what the Son of God had suffered for me. A great rush of love and adoration came over me. With streaming eyes I knelt and prayed for forgiveness, I lost myself in Him and for His sake alone. All thoughts of what I might gain from surrender to Jesus and from loving Him were absent from my mind and consciousness. I loved Him for Himself—very God and very man, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father.

“ I said the Lord’s prayer, and then I slept. I would not come to you at once. I told Joseph, and he blessed me and seemed happier than I had ever seen him before. ‘Go to her at once, Thomas,’ he said to me. ‘Tell her that Jesus has come to you, that your great earthly love is irradiated and made perfect by

your love for Him Who was present at the marriage feast of Cana.'

"But I wouldn't go at once. I distrusted myself. I wanted to wait and see if my new belief would stand the test of time, if it was more than a mere passing emotion of the brain. Yet, every day since then it has grown stronger and more strong. I have beaten through the waves of doubt. I have overcome the assaults of the powers and principalities of the air, who would obscure the light for me. I am a Christian, with all the splendour which that word confers. I have reached the Rock of Ages, and the tempest is over, the winds are stilled.

"To-day Joseph said this to me: 'Delay no longer. You are a new man in Christ Jesus. It has been given to me to know that the hour has come. Go to my dear sister in Christ, that gentle, lovely lady, and tell her of your love. She will be ready and waiting for you. This, also, I know, for it has been told me by the Holy Ghost.'

"That is the message which I said in my letter to you that I was to bring you from Joseph. And now, and now, dearest, most beautiful and best, you have heard all my story."

With these words he suddenly rose and stood above her, looking down at a head which was now bowed, at white hands that were clasped together upon her knees.

There was a momentary silence, and then a single deep sob of happiness and realization came from the girl upon the sofa.

The sound dispelled all his hesitation. It brought him back from the mystical realms of thought and spiritual memory to pure human emotion and love.

He stooped down quickly and caught her by the arms,

raising her up to him with a strong grasp that would not be denied.

Then two words rang out like a bell in the quiet room— "At last!"

She was in his arms now, close—ah, close! to the heart that beat for her alone. The freshness of her pure lips were pressed to his.

The moment was of heaven, and from heaven. Two pure and noble natures were united by God in their love for each other. And now they are sitting side by side and hand in hand.

The world is changed for them. Never again will it be the same, for they have tasted of the fruits of Paradise, have heard music which echoes from the shining pavements of the blest . . .

"Darling, there are no words at all in which to tell you how I love you. I have not a thought in the world which is not bound up in you, not a wish that is not centred in you."

"And I in you. Oh, Tom, I did not know it was possible to be so happy."

How long they sat thus, in the quiet, dainty room neither of them could have said. Time, so slow moving and leaden-footed in the hours of hope, flies with swiftest wings when hope has blossomed into fruition.

There was so much to say and tell! All their thoughts and hopes about each other from the very first must be mutually related, all the hidden secrets laid bare.

"Did you really think that of me, sweetheart? Oh, if I'd only known!" . . .

"But I wasn't different to other girls, really, darling. It was only because you, you loved me!"

Happy, roseate moments! Perhaps they are the

best and finest which life has to give, that God bestows upon his servants here below.

The door opened, and a little group of people entered the room—Lady Kirwan, Sir Augustus, Marjorie, and with them Joseph himself.

No one spoke for a moment. The new-comers all saw that the lovers were sitting hand in hand, that a declaration had been made.

Then pretty Marjorie, regardless of form or ceremony or the presence of the rest, ran to her cousin, put her arms round her neck, and kissed her.

"Oh, you dear darling!" she said; "I am so glad—oh, so, so happy!"

It was most prettily and spontaneously done. Nothing could have been more natural, charming or welcome.

There were tears in Sir Augustus' eyes, as that genial kind-hearted worldling held out his hand to Sir Thomas Ducaine.

"I congratulate you, my dear boy," he said heartily. "I see how it is with my dear niece and you. I love Mary like a daughter, and there are few people whom I would rather trust her to than you. God bless you both! Mary dear, come and kiss your uncle."

There was a hum of excited, happy talk, and then Sir Augustus, a man who had had always a great sense of "celebrating" events by some time honoured ceremony, suddenly said:

"Now we'll have a drink out of the loving-cup to Mary and Sir Thomas."

Nobody there wanted wine, but no one liked to baulk the genial and excited old gentleman. But just as he was about to press the bell and give the order, Sir Augustus suddenly paused. He looked at Joseph

for whom, by this time, he had acquired considerable regard, not unmixed with fear, though quite destitute of any real understanding of him.

"Oh—er—Mr. Joseph," he said, "I hope you won't mind——"

Sir Augustus had an idea that religion and teetotalism were the same thing and were inseparable. He was quite unable to differentiate between the two, no doubt because he knew absolutely nothing of either.

"Mind, Sir Augustus!" Joseph said, in surprise. "Why should I mind, and for what reason?"

The baronet did not quite know what to answer. "Oh, well, you know," he said at length. "I had an idea that you might object. Never mind."

Joseph laughed. The grave and beautiful face seemed singularly happy. Care had passed from it for a time; he looked with eyes of love at Mary and Sir Thomas, with eyes of blessing and of love. The stern denunciator of evil, the prophet and evangelist of God, who warned the world of its wickedness, had disappeared. In his stead was the kindly friend rejoicing in the joy of those who were dear to him.

A servant brought a great two-handled gold cup, which had been filled with wine.

Sir Augustus handed it to Lady Kirwan. The dame lifted the heavy chalice, jewelled with great amethysts, which had been presented to her husband by the Corporation of the City of London.

"My dear, dear niece," she said, while the tears gathered in her eyes; "I drink to your continual happiness, and to the name I bore, and which you bear now, the noble name of Lys!"

Then Sir Augustus took the cup. "To my pretty Mary, who I love as if she was a child of mine!" said

the good man ; " and to you, Tom Ducaine, who will make her a true husband, and are a gallant lover."

He passed the cup to his daughter Marjorie. The girl lifted it, looked straight at Mary Lys with a curious meaning and intentness in her eyes, and then said " With my love of your true love on this happiest of all happy hours."

She handed back the golden cup to her father, who was about to set it down upon a side table, when the Teacher spoke.

" Are you going to leave me out of your ceremony ? " Joseph said.

" Very sorry, very sorry," the baronet replied, in confusion. " I wasn't quite sure." He handed the cup to Joseph, but the Teacher only lifted it on high. " May God bless your union, my dear brother and sister," he said simply, and placed it on a table near by.

The deep music of the voice, the love in it, the deep sincerity, came to them all like a benison.

" You have given me everything in this world and hopes of everything in the next, Joseph," said Sir Thomas Duaine.

" You were Lluelyn's friend," Mary whispered.

" And you're a jolly good fellow, Mr. Joseph," said Sir Augustus, " in spite of all your critics, and I shall be glad to say so always."

At that, for the first time during their knowledge of him, Joseph began to laugh. His merriment was full-throated and deep, came from real amusement and pleasure, was mirth unalloyed.

Joseph finished his laughter. " May this hour," he said gravely, " be the beginning of a long, joyous and God-fearing life for you, Mary and Thomas

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Hand in hand and heart to heart may you do the work of the Lord."

Then, with a bow to all of the company assembled there, he went away.

When he had left the great house and walked for a few minutes, he came upon a huge public-house—a glittering structure at the corner of two streets.

He stopped in front of the great gaudy place, looked at it for a moment, sighed heavily, and went in.

CHAPTER XIX

"AS A BRAND FROM THE BURNING"

JOSEPH pushed open the swing-doors of the big public-house and entered beneath a lamp marked "Saloon Bar."

His face was quite changed.

In the short time which had elapsed since he left Sir Augustus Kirwan's house he seemed another person. The great eyes which had looked upon the lovers with such kindly beneficence had now the strange fixity and inward light that always came to them when he was about his Master's business. The face was pale, and the whole attitude of the Teacher was as that of a man who is undergoing a great nervous strain.

He walked down a passage. To his left were the doors of mahogany and cut-glass which led into those boxes which are known as "private bars" in the smart drinking-shops of London. To his right was a wall of brightly glazed tiles, and in front of him, at the passage end, was the door which led into the saloon bar itself. Pushing this open, he entered.

He found himself in a largish room, brilliantly lit by the electric light, and triangular in shape.

Along two of the walls ran padded leather lounges before the third was the shining semicircular bar gleaming with mahogany, highly polished brass, and huge cut-glass urns of amber spirit.

In one corner of the room, seated at a marble topped table, a man was talking to an overdressed woman with a rouged face and pencilled eyebrows.

In front of the counter, seated upon a high cane stool, was a young man. He wore a long brown overcoat of a semi-fashionable cut and a bowler hat pushed back on his head. His fair hair was a little ruffled, and his weak, youthful, though as yet hardly vicious face, was flushed high up on the cheek-bones. He was smoking a cigarette of the ten-for-threepence type, and chattering with a somewhat futile arrogation of merriment and knowingness to the barmaid, who had just set a glass of whisky-and-water before him.

For a minute or two, hidden from view by an imitation palm in a pot of terra-cotta which stood upon the counter, Joseph escaped notice. He could hear part of the conversation from where he was—any one might have heard it.

It was the usual thing, vapid, meaningless, inane. A narrow intellect, destitute alike of experience and ideals, with one gift only, youth, imagined that it was seeing " life."

Two fools! Two weak, silly, unconsidered members of the rank and file, without knowledge, manners or charm.

Yet for these two Christ had died upon the Cross no less surely than He had died for prince or pope or potentate. It was thus Joseph thought.

The teacher's eyes were wet with tears, a beautiful compassion dawned upon his face. He went up to the young man and touched him upon the shoulder.

At the touch the young fellow started and turned suddenly with a convulsive movement. His face was yellow with fear, his jaw dropped, his hands

trembled ; he was a repulsive picture of weak, nerveless, and uncontrollable terror.

The barmaid looked on in amazement. She marked the fear in her admirer's face, and with swift intuition knew from what cause it proceeded.

It was not the first time in her poor, stunted life, with its evil surroundings, that she had seen a gay young spark touched upon the shoulder ; seen the acquaintance of a month vanish for ever, never to come within her ken again save only in a few brief paragraphs in the newspaper reports of the Central Criminal Court.

" Who's your friend, Charlie ? " the girl said, with a sickly and inadequate attempt at merriment.

Joseph looked at her.

" My friend," he said, in his grave and beautiful voice. " I come to him with authority."

The girl gasped, then she turned and walked hurriedly to the other end of the bar, taking a newspaper from a drawer and holding it up with shaking fingers. She didn't want to be mixed up in the thing, at any cost she must pretend that she was unconcerned.

The great law of self-preservation—the animal law—had its way with her now. She was alone in the world ; she had her living to get ; she could not afford to be mixed up with any scandal. She acted after her kind, and fled as far as she could. Who shall blame her ?

Joseph took the young man by the arm and led him to the farthest corner of the room. The man and woman who had been there when Joseph entered had gone by now ; the place was quite empty.

" Charlie " found himself sitting side by side with the stranger who had led him so easily from the counter.

In the shrewd, mean brain of the young man one emotion had been succeeded by another. He had realized after the first moment of terror that Joseph was not what he supposed. The enormous relief of this certainty was succeeded by resentment and puerile anger. He feared that he had given himself away in "Belle's" eyes.

"Now, look here," he said suddenly, "you startled me for a moment, and I won't deny you did. But a gentleman doesn't come and interrupt another gentleman when he's talking to a lady. Who on earth are you, anyhow?"

The high piping voice, the silly expression, the uncertain, childish rage were unspeakably pitiable.

For answer Joseph put his hand into an inside pocket of his coat and produced a little leather bag.

It was full of sovereigns. While the young clerk stared at him with wondering, fascinated eyes, the Teacher took fourteen pounds from the bag and then returned it to his pocket.

He placed the money in the young man's hand.

"God sent me here to give you this," he said quietly. "It is the exact sum you have stolen from your firm. Replace it, and sin no more, God sends you this last opportunity."

The young fellow's face grew suddenly wet. He took the money with a hand that had lost all nervous force. He could hardly hold the coins.

"Who are you?" he said, in a faint whisper. "How did you know that I had sto—took the money?"

"The Holy Spirit brought me to you," Joseph answered very simply. "A short time ago I was leaving the house of some friends. A dear sister and brother of mine—I speak in the Christian, and not in the

family sense—had just plighted their troth. They are to be united in happy and honourable wedlock. I was coming away with my thoughts full of them, and feeling very happy in their happiness. For, you must know, that I love those two people very dearly. Well, as I passed by this place, I was told that there was some one within it who was very miserable. I knew that I must come in and comfort you, and take you out of the net which had enmeshed your young life. Your mother sits at home in Balham, and longs for you. The small pittance that your father's insurance money has secured for her is just enough to support her; but it is not enough to bring any comfort or brightness into her life. But you never go home in the evenings until very late. She sits waiting for you, yearning over her only son, and praying to God for his reformation. But you never come. And when at last you go down home by the last available train, you are often more or less intoxicated, and your mind is always filled with debased images and ideals, disordered longings and evil hopes. And for that reason your mother can never get very near you in spirit. What you are becoming repels her and wounds her motherhood. And now you have begun to steal from your employers, and you walk in deadly fear. In the back of your mind you know that discovery is inevitable before very long. Yet you put the thought away, and try and persuade yourself that everything will come right somehow, though you have no idea how. And during the last fortnight the process of deterioration has been more and more rapid. You have been drinking heavily to deaden your conscience and alleviate your alarm. You have known the end is near. Is not all this the truth?"

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The tears were rolling down the weak, young face. The flaccid mouth quivered; the neck was bowed.

"All this, sir," said the young man—"all this is true."

"A broken and contrite heart," the Teacher answered, "are not despised of God. By his great mercy I have been sent to you to save you. Restore the money you have stolen, but do far more. Turn from darkness; seek light. Come to Jesus Christ. Boy, you have heard of what is known as the 'Great Refusal'; you know how the young man with great possessions could not, and would not, give them up to follow the Son of God? But you deny Jesus for a pot of beer! You give up your hope of eternal life to come and the peace of God in this wicked world for nothing—nothing at all? Now come with me to my house in Bloomsbury, my house of godly men. There you shall pray and repent, and from there you shall go home cleansed and purged of your sin, filled with the Holy Spirit, ready and anxious to lead a new life, walking from henceforth in Christ Jesus."

They went out of the place together. The boy never cast a backward glance at his innamorata of a few minutes ago. He followed the Teacher in blind obedience. He was as one stunned. They came into the big old-fashioned square where was the house which Sir Thomas Ducaine had given to Joseph and his brethren. The windows were all lighted up, and there was a small crowd lingering in front of the door.

"They are all praying within," Joseph said. "Tomorrow we are to go down into the worst places of the East End. A party of great people are coming with us. We have persuaded them to come, in order

that they may see for themselves what these parts of London really are like."

He spoke quietly, and in a purely conversational tone, as if to an equal. He knew well what the poor lad who walked so humbly by his side was suffering. He knew of the remorse and shame, but also of the hope, which were pouring into the young's man's heart. And he knew also that all this was but a preparation for what was to come—that there must, indeed, be a final agony of surrender, an absolute and utter "giving-in" to Jesus.

So, as they walked across the square, he tried to calm his captive's nerves by a quiet recital of the great and hopeful things that they were to do on the morrow.

Yet even to Joseph it was not then given to know what things the morrow would bring forth.

CHAPTER XX

MURDER AND SUDDEN DEATH

THE big house was very plainly furnished. What was absolutely necessary had been put into it, but that was all. Sir Thomas Ducaine had been astounded at the simplicity of the arrangements. The wealthy young man, accustomed as he was to every luxury and amenity of life that riches bring, was most anxious to make the place more comfortable.

"My dear fellow," he said to Joseph, "you can't possibly live like this. Why, it's barer than a work-house! You must really let me send you some things in."

But the baronet had not in the least succeeded in altering the Teacher's determination.

"The Lord's work is to be done," Joseph had answered. "We are here to do it, and our thoughts are set on other matters. We have no need of these things."

"But you don't think comfort or luxury, I suppose you would call it, wrong?"

"Certainly not, if a man has earned it, is robbing nobody in acquiring it, and finds personal enjoyment in it. Christ sat at the rich man's feast. He took the gift of the precious ointment. But for us such things are unnecessary."

So the house, now more famous than perhaps any house in London, was a veritable hermit's cell in its

appointments. There, however, the resemblance ceased entirely. The place hummed with varied activities. It was the centre of the many organizations that were springing into being under Joseph's direction ; activities made possible by Sir Thomas Ducaine's magnificent gifts and the stream of outside donations that had followed in their wake.

Joseph and his young companion passed through the little crowd of loiterers and curious people that nearly always stood before the door of the mysterious house where the Teacher was now known to reside. There was a stir and movement as he came among them, nudgings of elbows, a universal pressure forward, whispers and remarks below the voice : " That's him ! " " There's Joseph himself ! "

Joseph passed through the crowd without taking any notice of it. On the doorstep he paused and turned as if to speak. The people—there may have been thirty or forty of them—pressed forward in a circle of eager faces. On the outskirts of the group there was a woman, dressed in black and past the middle-age. She seemed to hang back, as if reluctant, or too timid, to approach.

Joseph's eye fell upon her. Then he took a latchkey from his pocket and gave it to the young man.

" Open the door," he said, " and go into the house. Go into the room on the right-hand side of the hall, and I will meet you there."

The young man did as he was bidden, and disappeared.

Then Joseph spoke.

" Among you all," he said, " there is but one here that needs me. You have come to see a show, not to seek God and help to lead you to Him. Get

you gone from this place, for there is no health in you ! ”

The voice rang out in stern command—a command which it seemed impossible to disobey. Without a word, the people turned and slunk away, melting like ghosts into the darkness of the square.

Only the woman in black remained, and she now came timidly up to the Teacher.

“ Sir,” she said, in a thin but clear and educated voice—“ sir, I should like to speak with you, if I may.”

“ My friend,” he answered. “ I was waiting for you. Come within the house.”

He led the woman into a small room on the left-hand side of the hall—an uncarpeted room, with nothing but a few chairs, a big table covered with papers, and a purring gas-stove upon the hearth.

At the Teacher’s invitation the woman sat down, and revealed a thin, anxious face and eyes that seemed perpetually trembling upon the brink of tears.

“ It is very kind of you to see me, sir,” she said. “ I never expected that I should have such good fortune. But I have read about you in the papers—that you go about doing good, just as our dear Lord did, and something within me moved me to seek you out, even if it was only just to look at you. For I am very unhappy, sir, and I have no one to confide in, no one from whom I can ask about my trouble or obtain advice from.”

“ Tell me all about it,” Joseph said gently. “ When I stood at the door and looked at the people I felt in my heart that they were there out of idle curiosity. God in His wisdom has given me power to know these things. But something came straight from you to me

that made me aware that you needed me. Tell me everything."

"It's about my son, sir," the woman said, noticing the slight start that Joseph gave and the new light that came into his eyes. "I am a widow with one son. He is just twenty, and is employed as a clerk in a City House. But he is going wrong, sir. I can read the signs easily. He stays out late at night, seems to be losing his love for me, and is impatient of anything I say to him. And more than once he has come home intoxicated lately. And in his room I have found programmes of the performances at music-halls and such places.

"I do not pry about, sir, nor am I foolishly severe and hard. Young men must have their amusements, and they must have their secrets, I suppose. I do not expect Charlie to tell me everything. But he only earns thirty shillings a week, part of which he gives me for his board and lodging. He cannot possibly afford these amusements.

"I have a terrible fear that never leaves me that he has not been honest, that he must have been taking other people's money, and that he will be ruined. I have prayed and prayed, sir, but it really seems as if prayer is of no use, though, of course, I keep on."

"Don't say that," Joseph answered. "Prayer is still the greatest force in the world, however dependent we may become at times. But your prayers have been answered. Charlie is saved!"

The weeping mother gave a sudden cry, half of joy, half of incredulity.

"But, sir," she stammered, "how can you know that? Oh, if only it could be true!"

"It is true, my dear sister," he answered. "The

Lord led me to a place where I found your son, not an hour ago. The Holy Ghost told my mind that there was a widow's son whom I could save. All you have been conjecturing is only too true. Charlie has done the things you say. He has taken money from his employers, but I have given him the sum that he may return it to them. He is here, in this house now, and I know that the leaven of repentance is working within him, and that he feels that he is rescued from both material and spiritual ruin. We are going to pray together. Come with me, and add your prayers to ours."

But when they crossed the hall and entered the room opposite, they found that the young man was already on his knees.

Day by day some such episode as this occurred. Joseph's power seemed more and more sure and wonderful. When he had sent away the widow and her son, tearful and happy, with something in the face of the young man that had never been there before, the Teacher went up the wide Georgian stairs to a large room on the first floor.

No one was there but old David Owen. All the other friends and companions of Joseph were out upon various efforts of compassion and salvation; only the old man remained, for he had a cold, and could not face the night air. A grey, knitted comforter was round his neck, and he was slowly eating his supper—a bowl of bread-and-milk. Before him, on the table, was a large Bible, and he was reading eagerly as he ate, reading with the avidity and concentrated interest that more ordinary people give to an engrossing romance.

He looked up as Joseph entered, and smiled at him.

"It's wonderful, Master!" he said. "It grows more

and more wonderful every time I opens it. I've spent my life reading in the Holy Book, and I'm an old man now. But ten lives would be all too short!"

He pointed to the volume with gnarled, wrinkled fingers that trembled with emotion.

"Ah! 'Twas a bitter nailing!" he went on. "A bitter, bitter torture He bore for us. And remember, Joseph, He bore the sins of the whole world, too. I'm no scholar, and I can't see things like you can. All the time I'm reading an' yet I know I can only see a little bit of it. But even that's rending and tearing, Master. It's dreadful what He suffered for us! I can't understand why every one doesn't love Him. It's easy to understand folk doing wrong things. The flesh is very strong—man is full of wickedness. Satan, he goes about tempting the heart, with his dreadful cunning. But, whatever a man does, and is sorry for afterwards, I can't understand his not loving Jesus. And so few folk love Jesus in this wicked town!"

"The clouds are very dark, David," Joseph answered. "But they will break. The dawn of the Lord is at hand, and deliverance is sure. But I too, at this moment, am full of gloom and sorrow. You know my bad hours, old friend. One of them is with me now. I fear some calamity, though I pray against it. But it is coming. Something tells me it is coming. It is as if I heard slow footsteps drawing nearer and nearer——"

David looked anxiously at his chief.

"I doubt but you've been doing something that's taken power from you, Master," he said. "It has ever been thus with you. Have you not told us of the night when we went to the theatre-house, the home

of the ungodly, when you walked the streets of Babylon, and were full of doubt, though you had struck a blow for God that rang through England? And what happened then? Did you not meet the young man who is great in the eyes of the world—the young man who has given a fortune for our work—the young man who has come to Jesus at last?"

Joseph bowed his head.

"Yes, David," he replied; "it was even so, blessed be God. But to-night I feel differently. Then I was trembling upon the verge of doubt. My old disbelief had appeared again within me. It was as if a serpent slept in my brain and suddenly raised its head in coiled hate and enmity to the Light. But now it is not the same. I love and believe. The torture of a martyrdom, of which I am not worthy, could not alter that. But I have a terrible apprehension—a fear of what to-morrow may bring forth. I cannot explain it; I do not understand it. But nevertheless it is there, and very real."

There was a silence in the big room.

The gas-jets shone upon the walls covered in faded crimson paper, the long table of deal where the brethren ate their simple meals, the single picture which hung over the fireplace—a reproduction of Christ knocking at the door of the human heart, by Holman Hunt.

There was no sound but that of a falling coal in the glowing fire.

Then old David spoke.

"Master," he said, "I think you've no call to be afraid or to fear the future. It's in God's hands, and there it is. But as far as a poor man can look into the matter, I think 'tis this way with you. We all

know how blessed you have been. We all know—every one in Britain knows—that you are a special channel for the operations of the Holy Ghost in our land. Out of all men you have been mysteriously chosen to hear the heavenly voices and carry out their warnings. But all men are soul and body, too. You can't divide one from t'other while men live. Therefore it's bound to be that if your soul has been working hard on God's business, it has drained your body of its strength, and so you have these fearful thoughts. Eat and drink, and get back courage ! ”

Joseph smiled.

“ You are right, David, I believe. I will have a bowl of milk-and-bread also. I must be strong for to-morrow. With God's blessing, it will be a great day for London. There has never been such a chance of doing good before. Yes, I must save myself for that ! ”

“ Is it all arranged, Master ? ” the old man asked.
“ Are all the great people really coming ? ”

“ Yes, David. And, please God, on the day after to-morrow the kingdom shall be thrilled. Sir Thomas Ducaine is coming to inspect his own property in the East End for the first time. Sir Augustus Kirwan is coming—a powerful and influential man. And the Duke of Dover is coming also. Then the Bishop of East London, though he knows very well—saint that he is—will be with us also. Our dear brother Hampson will be of the party, and also that very valiant soldier of Christ, that new recruit, Eric Black. Black and Hampson—God bless them !—will give the result of our pilgrimage to the world. It should wake all London to a storm of anger and indignation.

“ These things have been discovered and published

before, but only in isolated instances and at fugitive times, and the voice has always been stifled and obacured. The vested interests have been too strong. But now there is a real spiritual fervour in London. The Holy Spirit has descended on the city. There is a quickening on all sides, the air is full of the Redeemer's name. Therefore, I trust and pray that the results of our visit to-morrow will be far-reaching. Several other friends and well-wishers will accompany us in addition to the names of those I have mentioned."

"It is a fine thing to get these great people to go," said the old man simply. "Then how can you be downcast, Joseph? Surely here is yet another evidence of the favour and protection of God?"

"I do not know why this assails me," the Teacher answered; "but it does, and it is there. I cannot help it."

David Owen shut the Bible on the table in front of him, and rose to his feet.

"Dear Master," he said, "the Son of God was also troubled, in the Desert and in the Garden. But it is well—all is well. All is part of the beneficent ordering of the Father. There is but one medicine for your black thoughts, dear Master, and after you've taken it you'll let come what may."

"And that is, old friend?"

"The Lord's Prayer," answered the old gentleman, taking off his horn spectacles and placing them upon the table.

And, kneeling down, they said it together.

* * * * *

It was the middle of the morning and a dull, leaden day. There was no fog down in the breathing areas

of town, but, high above, a leaden pall hung over the City of Dreadful Night, shutting out the clear light of the sun, livid, sinister and hopeless.

In the big room of the house in Bloomsbury a dozen people were gathered together. Sir Augustus Kirwan was talking to The Duke, a thick-set, clean-shaven man with a strong watchful face. Sir Thomas Ducaine and Eric Black the journalist, stood together.

Several other notabilities stood in the big, bare room, and there were also three unobtrusive men, with pointed beards, who stood together a little apart from the others, Detective-inspectors Alpha, Beta and Gamma, the real satraps and rulers of the lawless districts of Whitechapel and its environs.

All the men wore hard felt hats and dark overcoats, peer and policeman alike. It does not do to venture where these were going in anything but a very simple and unobtrusive dress.

Joseph and Hampson were talking earnestly together in one corner of the room. They were mapping out the terrible itinerary that should be taken, readjusting and remembering their own sad knowledge of the East, when they had walked starving down the Commercial Road.

"And now, my friends," Joseph said at length, in his deep, organ voice, "I think that all is prepared, and that we may start. Sir Thomas has some carriages waiting for us below."

Sir Augustus Kirwan answered the evangelist.

"My dear fellow," he said—"my dear Joseph, we shall all be delighted to come as soon as may be. But has it occurred to you that while we have all, doubtless, breakfasted, none of us have as yet lunched. It is lunch time now, you know; and though a piece

of bread and cheese would do excellently for me, and no doubt for the rest of us, you can hardly expect the present company to penetrate into Whitechapel fasting ! ”

The Teacher looked at Sir Augustus with a startled face. Then he flushed slightly. It had never occurred to him that his guests must necessarily need refreshment. On his own part he had put away material needs as things of no moment for himself. He was sustained, even in body, by spiritual food. But he realized now how remiss he had been, and that all men were not as he was.

“ Sir Augustus,” he said, in a voice full of pain and contrition, “ I have been absolutely stupid. It is quite abominable of me not to have thought of it, but there is, I am dreadfully afraid, no lunch at all ! ”

Sir Thomas Ducaine joined in the conversation.

“ My dear Joseph,” he said, “ don’t make yourself unhappy. There is plenty. Some of my people have brought lunch. Mary and I foresaw this little *contretemps*, and we made arrangements accordingly. In your burning eagerness to get us all down to see what you have to show us you forgot that we are but mortal, and that the body must be nourished if the eye is to see and the brain observe.”

Joseph’s face had cleared, but it wore a somewhat rueful expression.

“ I can’t thank you enough,” he said, “ for thinking of this. It is a fault in me that I did not do so myself. One is too apt to forget that we are all body and spirit also. Forgive me ! ”

They all fell to at the sandwiches and so forth which two of Sir Thomas Ducaine’s servants brought into the room.

Only Joseph took nothing at all. He stood by himself, tall, beautiful, lost in a reverie that no one disturbed.

He was musing and dreaming still as the carriages took the party to the East End of London.

But when Bishopsgate was passed at last, he threw his thoughts from him with a great effort, and became once more the keen and eager leader of those people whom he had brought to see the ultimate horror of the Modern Babylon.

They sent the carriages away at a certain turning in the Whitechapel Road. Then they plunged into the dark.

And how dark that darkness is! Fiction can hardly tell—fiction must not tell, fearing to infringe upon the bitterness and the agony of the truth. For we who write of things as they are must always consider our audience. Ask General Booth, G. R. Sims, or Mr. Holmes, the police-court missionary, what is the measure of this darkness. Ask the modern martyrs of our day, of all sects and creeds, who labour in these hell-ridden places.

Ask, and you shall hear nothing but the tolling of a great bell, the deep and awful sound of immedicable misery, the iron pæan of the blackness of sin, the deep and ringing wail of the mighty bell—the iron bell—which tolls of hopelessness, and voices the cry of the downtrodden, the oppressed, the lost!

The slaves of the Modern Babylon! But with one difference. In the walled city of wickedness between the two great rivers, hope had not come. They could not know that our Lord was to be born of a pure Virgin to save them——

Thoughts akin to these were in the minds of all of

them as they went in and out of the foul slums of the East.

Sir Thomas Ducaine was covered with shame as he saw the horrors all around—horrors existing upon his own property, long unregarded and unknown. But the young man was not the only one among them who registered a mental vow to do all that he could for the wretched beings they had come amongst.

Sir Augustus Kirwan, though he had taken the chair at many philanthropic meetings, and though his name often headed important subscription lists, had never really been brought in contact, in actual personal contact, with the great open wound of London.

The party had come to the mouth of a particularly evil-looking alley. There is character in brick and stone, and this place—"Wilson's Rents" by name—had a sinister cut-throat aspect in every line of it.

"What is in there?" Sir Augustus asked one of the police-inspectors.

"It's a particularly bad street, Sir Augustus," the man answered. "A sort of great human rabbit-warren or rat's run, as you may say. The houses nearly all communicate through cellars and subterranean passages."

"Shall we go down here?" Sir Augustus asked Joseph.

"I should not advise it, sir," said the policeman.

"The people are so dirty and degraded and disgusting in their habits that they hardly resemble human beings at all."

"Never mind that," Sir Augustus answered.

"Now we have come I wish to see everything, however personally distasteful it may be. I am ashamed, gentlemen, to think that I have shirked so obvious

a duty as this for so long ! I am sorry and ashamed of myself ! ”

With eyes that were not quite dry the great financier took Joseph by the arm and marched down the alley, followed by the others.

They walked cautiously down the place, which seemed strangely deserted. Sir Augustus was talking eagerly to Joseph, opening his heart in a way to which he had long been a stranger, when there was a sudden loud report in the air above them.

Looking upwards with startled eyes, they saw that a little coil of blue smoke was floating out of an open window high above them.

A second afterwards Sir Augustus Kirwan sighed twice and fell forward upon his face, dead, shot through the heart.

CHAPTER XXI

WAITING !

MR. ANDREW LEVISON lived in Jermyn Street. His establishment was comfortable but modest. A sitting-room, a small dining-room, a bedroom for himself, and one for his man—these, together with the bath-room, completed his suite.

It was a bright morning as he opened his *Daily Wire* and sat down before the kedjeree and kidneys that his servant had just brought him for breakfast. It was rather late; the Jew had been at a theatrical supper-party the night before until long after midnight. During the party, at which a great many of the stars of the lighter stage had been present, the conversation had turned almost entirely upon the marked slump in theatrical business during Joseph's ministry in London.

One and all of their company were united in their hatred and alarm of this evangelist who bade fair to ruin them.

The whole situation was, moreover, aggravated because of the immense public support Joseph was receiving from some of the most wealthy and influential people in society. There was no getting over this fact. And yet no one had any remedy to suggest.

Lord Ballina and Mimi Addington had also been of the party, and a keen observer might possibly have

detected a certain furtive look which passed between the actress, the peer, and the theatrical manager. All three, however, held their peace, and contributed little or nothing to the problem of how the situation was to be dealt with.

And now Mr. Levison, as he sat at table, smiled quietly to himself, reflecting that he could very considerably astonish many of his colleagues if it had been possible to do so.

The sitting-room—for Levison did not breakfast in the dining-room—was full of sunshine. A great bowl of sulphur-coloured hothouse roses stood on the writing table. The white panelled walls, hung with rare old Japanese colour prints, caught and reflected the apricot light of the sun, which poured in through the windows.

The room was carpeted with a fabric from Persia—the veritable peacock blue and dark red of Teheran. The arm-chairs were upholstered in vermilion leather. Everything harmonized and was in taste, and it was with complacency that Levison looked round him and picked up the paper.

Almost the first thing that struck his eye was a paragraph headed "Movements of Joseph."

Mr. Levison started, and read with great attention. The paragraph ran as follows—

"We are able to give our readers exclusive information as to the next move in the vast campaign for the reformation of London which is being undertaken by the teacher known as Joseph, in company with his distinguished colleagues and helpers. One of the most crying evils of the day is undoubtedly the fact that, while one section of the population lives in a splendour and luxury perhaps unparalleled in the

history of civilization, another section, and this by far the larger, lives under conditions of squalor so great that it becomes a horror, conditions that can only be hinted at in polite society or in the public prints. The state of the East End of London has long engaged the attention of philanthropists, but very little has been done to ameliorate it in comparison with its crying needs. Sociologists have long since recognized that under present conditions very little can be done until the rich property owners combine and agree to sacrifice a portion of their emoluments in order to improve the condition of the poor. The teacher Joseph has recognized this fact, and is beginning a movement which may be very far-reaching in its consequences. To-day, we understand, a party of wealthy and distinguished gentlemen will be taken by the evangelist to some of the worst parts of the East End there to see for themselves the true condition of affairs. The remarkable personality which is at present the talk of London will indeed have accomplished a greater miracle than any of those strange and unexplained occurrences attributed to him if he can cleanse and purify one half-mile of Stepney or Whitechapel. For our part, we wish Joseph and his helpers every possible success in their endeavours."

Mr. Levison laid down the paper, and got up from his seat. He walked up and down the room twice, looked at his breakfast, shook his head, and then, going to a sideboard, poured some brandy from a tantalus into a glass, added a little water with a hand that shook slightly, and drank the mixture off.

So it was to be to-day, then? Mr. Levison had not realized the imminence of his plot. It was one

thing to reflect complacently that one had arranged to remove a troublesome intruder from one's path on some unspecified date ; it was, as Levison realized now, quite another thing to sit down and wait for the event to happen in an hour or two.

Levison looked at his watch. It was eleven o'clock. He supposed, though he did not know with any certainty, that the party to the East End would hardly start before midday.

"They can't leave much before twelve, I should think, from wherever they meet," he muttered to himself. "Give them an hour to get down to the East End, another hour or more, perhaps, for the people"—another and far less pleasing word almost escaped Mr. Levison's lips—"for the people I have employed to do what has to be done. Roughly, suppose there ought to be some news in the paper between four and five."

The man's face had grown quite white, and his hands began to tremble more and more. No one had ever seen the self-possessed, genial-mannered *entrepreneur* like this. And when he stopped in front of the glass which hung over the mantel-shelf he started at the sight of his own guilty and terrified countenance.

Supposing that something should go wrong ! Supposing the man was caught, and confessed ! A thousand horrid apprehensions began to crowd into his mind, and the sweat came out cold and damp upon his forehead.

There were hours to wait. How should he employ them ? The theatre was closed ; there was no particular business claiming his attention at the moment. And he felt less and less inclined to sit alone in his

chambers waiting. Exercise, he came to the conclusion, a long, brisk walk, was the only thing that could restore his mental tone.

He rang for his coat and hat, took a stick from the stand in the hall, and went out into Jermyn Street. For a moment he was undecided as to his direction. The thought of the Park crossed his mind, but it was superseded by another and more welcome one. He would walk up to St. John's Wood—that was a good distance—and he would call on Mimi Addington, and tell her the news that he had read in the paper. He smiled maliciously at the idea. Perhaps Lord Ballina might be there, too ; if so, well and good. His fellow conspirators should share his uneasiness. They were in the thing as much as he was, and he saw no reason why he should be the only one to suffer. The idea appealed to his Oriental imagination, and in picturing to himself the probable fears of his companions when they knew that this was the actual day on which the assassination was to be attempted, Levison forgot his own, and it was quite with a jaunty step that he turned into St. James' Street.

Even at the moment when he had realized that the dark deed which he had instigated was to be attempted on that very day, Levison had felt not the slightest remorse or compunction. Fear he had felt, the fear of discovery, but that was all. A criminal is nothing more or less than a supreme egotist. Levison saw everything in its relation to himself, and himself alone ; never in relation to other people, or to God. Joseph was ruining his business, therefore he had plotted Joseph's death. He had no bitter feeling against Joseph whatever, even though the Teacher's advent and appearance in the theatre had done him

such serious harm. Levison was a philosophic scoundrel, and took things as they came, and wasted no brain power or mental force in the exercise of personal dislikes.

He arrived at Mimi Addington's house in St. John Wood a little before two, not having hurried at all. The actress was at home, and he was at once shown into the drawing-room, where she was sitting with Lord Ballina and a friend of his who was introduced to Levison as Mr. Errol Smith. Fortunately for Levison's plans, Lord Ballina's friend was on the point of departure, and shortly went away leaving the three conspirators together.

"Well, Andrew, how goes it?" Ballina said, with his vacuous dissipated little simper. "When are you going to open the theatre again?"

"Well, that depends," Levison answered, with a meaning look. "You know very well what that depends on!"

He was watching the effect of his words upon Mimi Addington as he spoke, and saw the hard, cruel eyes glisten with hate at his reference, and the beautifully-shaped mouth harden into a thin line of crimson.

"It's some time now since we had that little talk, Andrew," the woman said, in a voice that she strove to keep well under control, though every now and then the hysteria of her hate crept into it and suggested that which lay, lava-hot, deep down in her heart.

"Well, d'you know, my dear," Levison said, taking out a cigar and lighting it with great deliberation—"well, d'you know that it's the little matter that we discussed that I've come up about this afternoon."

"How much longer is that Joseph to be allowed

to cumber London ? " she said, with a hissing intake of the breath.

" Well, that all depends," Levison answered, amused with the skill with which he could play upon her passion. The Jew loved power and the exercise of it. He gratified himself now by playing on her as if she were an instrument and noticing how swiftly she responded to his touch.

" Oh, hang it all, Andrew," Lord Ballina said, " don't tease Mimi, If you've got any news about this business let's have it."

Levison thought he had gone far enough, and took the *Daily Wire* which he had brought with him from his pocket.

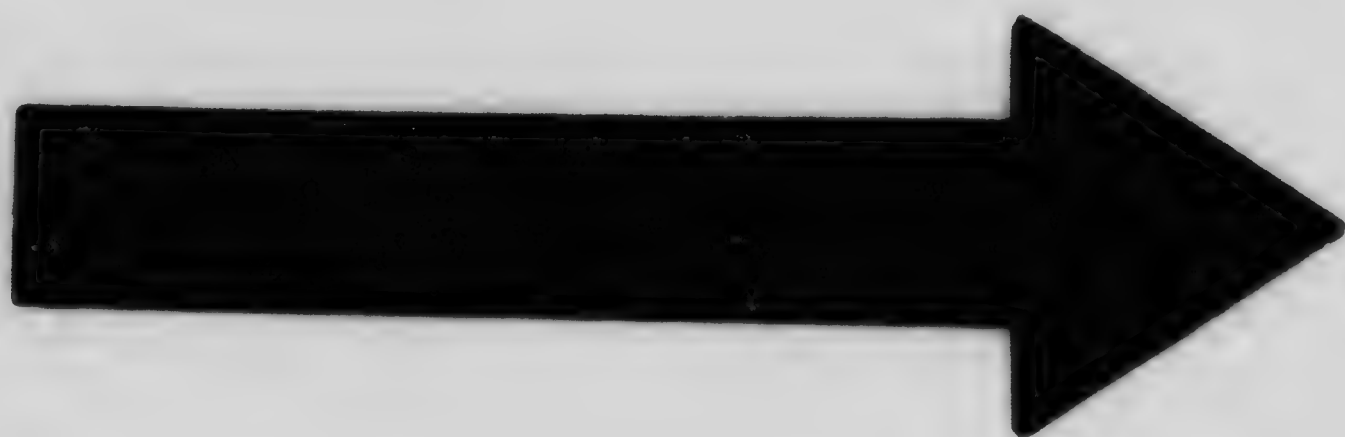
" Read that," he said, handing it to the young peer.

Ballina read out the paragraph in a monotonous sing-song, with now and then such observations as suggested themselves to his limited and vicious intelligence.

" Well," he said, " for the matter of that, Andrew, the papers are full of the fellow every day, and his goings on. I don't see what news there is in that, it's only just another of his games. Was that all you came up to tell us ? "

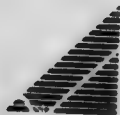
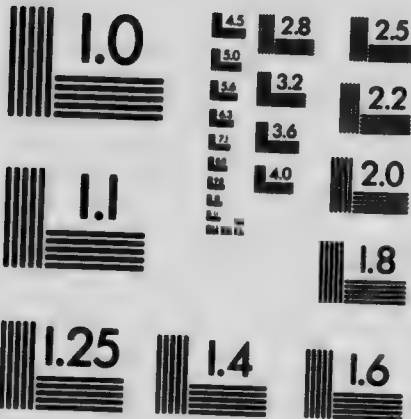
Levison saw the look of scorn that Mimi Addington flashed at the young man. Her own intelligence was infinitely keener ; and though Levison had not gone into any details about the arrangements he had made, she saw the significance of the fact in the newspaper immediately.

" What a duffer you are, Bally," she said contemptuously. " Why, it's perfectly clear, of course. What better place could you have for knocking a Johnny on the head than an East End slum ? That's what



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Andrew means, and that's what he's come to tell isn't it, Andrew?"

"Your brilliant intellect, assisted by your personal dislike, has at once divined the truth, Mimi," said Levison, leaning back upon the divan and blowing a blue cloud of smoke up towards the hanging Moor lamp.

"Why, then," Lord Ballina broke in suddenly, "why, then, it's this afternoon!" His voice had grown high and thin with excitement, and Levison saw once more a face from which all the colour had ebbed, and hands that twitched with sudden realization.

Mimi Addington suddenly rose up from her seat with a curiously sinuous and panther-like movement.

"This afternoon!" she said. "Then I shall sleep happy this night!"

"Oh, come, Mimi," Lord Ballina said, "you need not go quite so far as that. As a matter of fact, I—confound it, I wish we'd let the chap alone!"

The woman had sunk back upon the divan. She stretched out one slender, white hand, covered with flashing rings, and patted Levison upon the arm.

He shuddered at her touch, scoundrel as he was, but she did not see it.

Ballina was walking up and down the room, his feet making no sound upon the thick pile of Persian carpet. He snapped his fingers in an odd, convulsive fashion.

"I say, you know," he said at length, "I really don't like it. I wish to Heaven I'd never been mixed up in the affair. Supposing anything gets out?"

"Well, that's supposing me to be rather a big fool than I am," Levison answered, though the look of the other had in some subtle way affected him.

and all his own tremors of the morning were beginning to revive.

Then there was silence in the room for a time.

Although the morning had been bright and cheerful, the sun had become obscured shortly after midday, and a heavy gloom of fog, above which thunder had muttered now and then, had spread itself high up in the sky.

The oppression in the air had become much more marked during the last hour, and now, as the three people sat together, they were all experiencing it to the full.

For a long time nobody spoke at all, and when at length Mimi Addington made some casual observation, both the men started involuntarily. The woman's voice also was changed now. It was like the voices of her companions, loaded with sinister apprehension.

"When do you suppose," Lord Ballina said, in a shaking voice—"when do you suppose that we shall know if anything has happened, Andrew? Have you made arrangements with your—er—er—friends to report to you about it?"

"I'm not mad!" Levison answered shortly. "Hear! Why, if there's anything to hear you'll hear soon enough—What's that?"

He had started violently, and the perspiration was beginning to run down his face. A distant rumble of thunder breaking suddenly in upon the quiet of the room had startled him and betrayed more than anything else in what a state his nerves were.

"It's only thunder," Mimi replied. "Good Heavens, Andrew, you are enough to give one the jumps yourself! But if we're to know, how shall we know?"

"Why, it's very simple," Levison answered. "Do you see that if anything has—er—happened, it'll be in the evening papers and in the streets within the quarters of an hour from the time it's occurred. There will be journalists with this man Joseph, of course, there always are wherever he goes. Well, the papers will be up here by the motors in half-an-hour as they're issued, and we shall hear the newsboys shout it out all over the place."

"There's an old man who sells papers at the corner of Florence Street, only a few yards away," Mr. Addington broke in quickly. "The boys on the bicycles come up and supply him with all the new editions as they come out. I often hear them shouting."

"Then all we've got to do," said Andrew Levison, "is to wait until we hear that shouting."

They sat waiting—three murderers—and as they waited there a presence stole into the room, unseen, but very real. The grisly phantom Fear was among them. Waiting!

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CHAPTER XXII

THE HOUSE DESOLATE

THE echo of the shot which had struck down Sir Augustus Kirwan had hardly died away when two of the police inspectors, accompanied by Eric Black, rushed into one of the open doorways of the court. Their feet could be heard thundering up the rickety, wooden stairs of the old house, as Joseph and Sir Thomas Ducaine knelt, horror struck, by the side of the dead man, while the others crowded round in uncontrollable dismay.

Joseph himself seemed absolutely stunned for a moment, and it was Sir Thomas's firm and capable hands which were moving rapidly over Sir Augustus' chest, endeavouring to test the movement of the heart.

The young Duke of Dover was talking rapidly and in an undertone with the police inspector, and pointing upwards to the black, unglazed window-hole from which the smoke of the shot was still eddying out.

The whole series of events had occurred in a mere flash of time, with an astonishing swiftness which seemed to outstrip or to numb the lightning operations of thought itself.

There they stood in a group, stiffened and frozen into momentary immobility. The tall figure of Joseph bent over the empty shell which lay upon the ground ;

THE ANGEL.

the others clustered round, with wan faces of horror. The peer had his right hand upon the shoulder of the inspector and his left extended to the black, silent orifice above. And still the thunder of the shot of Eric Black and his companions could be heard as they raced upwards towards the room of the assassin.

Then suddenly, as if the noise of the shot, which now must have been fired for at least thirty-five or forty seconds, had awakened a sleeping population, a murmur arose like the murmur of a hive of bees suddenly disturbed.

It arose, grew louder and louder, resolved itself into tumultuous and divided voices, and then, from every doorway, the foul, mocking, and unclean denizens of the worst slum in London came pouring, trotting, and slouching out of their lairs.

The air was immediately filled with a horrid clamour, and to the keen, attentive ears of, at any rate, of Duke and the policeman, there seemed something genuine in the sound—that is to say, it was not the instinctive product of real surprise, but as though people who had suddenly appeared out of what seemed silence and desolation were well aware that something was going to happen.

Of this Joseph and Sir Thomas Ducaïne, who were lifting the portly body of the great financier, saw and understood nothing at all.

Just as Joseph and Sir Thomas, assisted by the others, were supporting the limp figure in their arms, the remaining inspector lifted his whistle to his lips and blew a loud and piercing call.

At the sound, the horrid crowd which surrounded the little group of death suddenly grew silent. They knew that ominous summons very well; it was

THE HOUSE DESOLATE

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their blood to know it, for to many of them it had been a note of doom.

The silence continued for a very short time, and was only broken in one significant and instinctive way.

A tall thin man, with a face which was a sheer wedge of sin and bestial impulse, suddenly pressed to the front of the crowd, where his eyes fell upon Joseph.

The inspector heard him say, in a quick, vibrating voice to some one at his side whom the inspector could not see—

"The wrong bloke!"

The whistle had its effect, and in a space of time which would have suggested to any one who had thought of it that the police arrangements for guarding the distinguished company which had ventured into these dark places were more complete than that company itself had any idea of, several uniformed constables came hurrying into the court.

The crowd of slum-dwellers melted away as a small piece of ice in the sun, and, save that the doors and low windows of the surrounding houses were now thronged with interested faces, the group in the middle of the place was free of interruption.

Three stalwart constables lifted up the body and bore it away. Joseph and the rest of his friends filed in a horror-struck procession.

The Teacher's head was bowed. His thin, white hands were clasped in front of him, and the tears were rolling down his cheeks.

Hampson was at his side, and as he looked up at his old comrade once more he was thrilled to the very marrow, even as he had been thrilled on that strange eventful afternoon when the two great beams of wood

had fallen from on high and struck down Joseph Bethune in the form of a cross.

For what Hampson now saw in his quick, imaginative brain, accustomed as it was to constant artistic images of the past, when Jesus walked in Jerusalem, was now the tall, bowed figure of the Saviour with wrists bound in front of Him, moving towards the shameful death which was to save and regenerate mankind.

Another scene in the Via Dolorosa!

It was now the middle of the afternoon. With magic celerity, even in that poverty-stricken district, carriages were found, and an ambulance brought from an adjacent police-station.

Then, through the crowded streets of the East, the long and busy thoroughfares of Fleet Street and the Strand, into the wide and spacious district where the rich dwell, the sad procession took its way.

And of all the crowds of busy humans that moved and ran about their business, no one suspected what these vehicles might mean. They passed through the busiest centres of the Modern Babylon without an indication or word of the true import of their passage.

Only Eric Black, who had come back disheartened with the two police-officers, from a hurried yet fruitless search among the huge and fetid warrens of the murder-hole, was speeding towards the office of the *Evening Wire*—the afternoon edition of the great daily—his heart full of pity and terror, while yet his keen journalistic brain was weaving burning words and sentences with which to announce what had happened to London.

The *cortège* arrived at last at the great house in Berkeley Square.

The day, which had begun brightly enough, was as if

the elements in London were sympathetic to the tragedy in which one of her foremost citizens had perished. They were now beginning to throw a heavy and thunderous gloom over the City.

Swiftly, while the frightened and white-faced servants stood speechless in the hall, the body of Sir Augustus Kirwan was borne into the library, and the family physician sent for at once. One of the police-inspectors remained in the house; the other hurried off to Scotland Yard to give his version of the affair, though by now all the district in which the murder had occurred was being thoroughly searched, and guarded on all sides by special police, who had been summoned by telephone from various parts of the metropolis.

Marjorie Kirwan was away upon a short visit to some friends. Lady Kirwan was, fortunately, out when the body of her husband was brought into the house.

In a very few minutes the doctor arrived, and after a brief examination, announced what all present knew only too well—that the baronet had been shot through the heart, and that the death had been painless and instantaneous.

The blinds in front of the house were all pulled down, and the butler was interrogated as to the whereabouts of Lady Kirwan by The Duke and Sir Thomas Duncaine.

"I'm sure I have no idea, my lord and Sir Thomas," said the faithful old fellow, with the tears rolling down his cheeks, "where my lady has gone. I know that she went out shortly after lunch, on foot. She said that she did not wish for the motor-brougham or a carriage. Sometimes of an afternoon my lady likes

to go out on foot, for the sake of a little exercise ; and the day being fine, it must have tempted her."

" Her maid will know, perhaps," Sir Thomas replied.

" I'm afraid not, sir," the butler answered, " for I know that Mrs. Summers has my lady's permission to visit her relatives at Camberwell this afternoon."

" Then," Sir Thomas replied, " where is Miss Lys ? "

" I can answer that," Joseph replied sadly. " She is working up in Bloomsbury, at the house of the Brotherhood."

" She must be sent for at once," Sir Thomas answered. " Indeed, in a few minutes I will go for Mary myself, and break this terrible news to her. It will be a frightful blow to my poor girl ; but she is so strong and self-reliant that she will be invaluable to receive Lady Kirwan when she returns, and to break this awful news, as only a woman, and such a woman as Mary is, could possibly do."

For a moment the young man's face lit up with love and tenderness, even in the presence of death, as he thought of the sweet and noble lady who had already given some of the best years of her life to the healing of sorrow, and who alone, in this great crisis, cost her what it might, could be depended upon to help the widow through the dark hours that lay before.

Now it happened that Lady Kirwan had indeed not gone very far. A few streets away from Berkeley Square there was a quiet little shop which was kept by a society of ladies who had interested themselves in the revival of fine lace manufacture in England. Girls were being taught all over the country to produce gossamer fabrics as beautiful as anything made in the hamlets around Ghent and Brussels or in the Beguinage at Bruges. Lady Kirwan was a patroness of the

movement, and on this afternoon she had walked round to discuss the question of profit-sharing with the lady who was in charge of the establishment.

Lady Kirwan liked to carry her own latchkey when she went out on little excursions of this sort, when there was no groom to run up the steps and open the front door. She had taken her key with her on this afternoon, and after doing the business for which she had set out, returned homewards in a peculiarly happy state of mind, which even the heavy atmosphere and lowering approach of thunder failed to disturb.

The lace business was going well, and the poor girls all over the country would have a substantial bonus added to their earnings. And other, more important things contributed to the kindly woman's sense of goodwill. Mary's engagement to Sir Thomas Ducaine was in itself a cause for immense congratulation. Despite all Mary's stupid ways—as Lady Kirwan was accustomed to call them—in spite of all the wasted years in the hospital, the girl had, nevertheless, captured one of the most eligible young men in London, and her wedding would be one of the greatest events in the modern history of the family of Lys. Marjorie also seemed to be more than a little attracted by the young Duke of Dover. He was a peer of very ancient lineage, upright, an honourable gentleman, and very well liked in society. That he was not rich made no difference whatever. The Kirwans' own enormous wealth would be lavished at the disposal of the young couple. And, finally, at a great political reception a few nights ago, the Prime Minister had taken Lady Kirwan into supper, and had told her, without any possibility of mistake, that in a week or two more the great services of Sir Augustus to the Government, and the financial weight

exerted at a critical moment, which had forced a foreign Power to modify its demands, were to receive high recognition, and that the baronetcy was to be exchanged for the rank of viscount.

As Lady Kirwan, smiling and stately, ascended the steps of her house in Berkeley Square, and took from her reticule the tiny Bramah key which unlocked the massive portal, she felt she had not a care in the world, and was a woman blessed indeed.

"We must get rid of this Joseph fellow now," she thought, as she inserted the key. "He has played his part well enough in bringing Mary and Thomas together; but I don't think it will be advisable, even though he is a fashionable pet at present, to have very much to do with him. I never cared very much for the man, and it is awkward to have him about the house. One can always send him a cheque now and then for his good works!"

The door swung open, and she entered the hall. At the moment there was nobody there—a fact which she noted for a future word of remonstrance, as a footman was always supposed to sit there at all times. But from the further end of the hall, from the library, the door of which was a little ajar, her quick ear detected a murmur of voices in the silence.

She took a step or two forward, when suddenly Sir Thomas Ducaine came striding quickly and softly out of the library, the door closing quietly behind him.

"Ah, Tom, my dear boy!" Lady Kirwan said. "So you are all back, then? I do hope you're not fatigued by those terrible places that you've all been to see. Horrible it must have been? Don't forget that you are dining with us to-night. Mary has promised to leave her nonsense up at Bloomsbury and be home in

time, so we shall have a pleasant family dinner. Where is Augustus? Is he in the library?"

Then Lady Kirwan noticed something strange in the young man's face. The colour had all ebbed from it; it was white with a horrid, ghastly whiteness, that absolutely colourless white one sees on the under side of a turbot or a sole.

"Good gracious!" she said, with slightly faltering voice. "Are you ill, Tom? Why, what is the matter? Has anything happened?"

The young man's brain was whirling. Lady Kirwan's sudden and unexpected appearance had driven all his plans and self-control to the winds. He shook with fear and agitation. He tried to speak twice, but the words rattled in his mouth with a hollow sound.

The current of fear ran from him to the tall and gracious dame who stood before him, and flashed backwards and forwards between the two like a shuttle—in the loom of Fate.

"What is it?" she said in a high-pitched voice. "Tell me at once!"

As she spoke the hall suddenly became filled with silent servants—servants whose faces were covered with tears, and who stood trembling around the vast, luxurious place.

The dame's eyes swept round in one swift survey. Then, suddenly, she drew herself to her full height.

"Where is Augustus?" she said in a low, vibrating voice that thrilled the heart of every person there with pain. "Where is my husband?"

"Sir Augustus, my dear Lady Kirwan," Sir Thomas began to gasp, with tears running down his cheeks—"Sir Augustus is very ill; but——"

He got no further, Lady Kirwan began to move quickly, as if some dread instinct had told her the truth, towards the library door.

"No, no, dear Lady Kirwan," Sir Thomas said—"don't go!"

She brushed him aside as if he had been a straw in her path, and the terrified group of people saw her burst upon the great white-painted door which led to the chamber of death.

There was a silence, an agonized silence of several seconds, and then what all expected and waited for came.

A terrible cry of anguish pealed out into the house, a cry so wild and despairing that the very walls seemed to shudder in fearful sympathy.

A cry, repeated thrice, and then a choking gurgle, which in its turn gave way to a deep contralto voice of menace.

Inside the library Lady Kirwan reeled by the long table upon which the still form of the man she loved lay hushed for ever in death. One arm was thrown around the rigid, waxen face, the left was outstretched with accusing finger, and pointing at Joseph the evangelist.

"It is you?" the terrible voice pealed out. "It is you, false prophet, liar, murderer, who have brought a good man to his end! It was you who killed my dear nephew Lluellyn upon the hills of our race! It is you—who have come into a happy household with lying wiles and sneers and signs and tokens of your master Satan, whom you serve—who have murdered my beloved! May the curse of God rest upon you! May you wither and die and go to your own place and your own master—you, who have killed my dear one!"

Then there was a momentary silence, once more the high despairing wail of a mind distraught, a low shuddering sigh, and a heavy thud, as Lady Kirwan fell upon the floor in a deep and merciful swoon.

As Sir Thomas, who had hitherto stood motionless in the middle of the hall, turned and went swiftly back into the library, the Teacher came out with bowed head, and passed silently to the front door. No one assisted him as he opened it and disappeared.

How he arrived at the old house in Bloomsbury Joseph never knew. Whether on foot, or whether in some vehicle, he was unable to say, on thinking over the events afterwards. Nor did any one see him enter the house. The mystery was never solved.

With bowed head, he mounted the stairs towards the long common-room where his friends and disciples were wont to gather together.

Opening the door, he entered. By a dying fire, with a white, strained face, stood Hampson, who had only accompanied the funeral carriage up to a certain point in its progress towards Berkeley Square, and, urged by some inexplicable impulse, had descended from his carriage during a block in the traffic, and made straight for the headquarters of the Brotherhood.

As Joseph entered the little journalist gave a great sigh of relief. "At last," he said—"at last!"

"My friend, and my more than brother," the Teacher answered, in a voice broken with emotion. "Where is our dear sister—where is Mary?"

"The Lord came to Mary," Hampson answered in a deep and awe-stricken voice, "and she has obeyed His command. I came here, knowing that the brethren were all out upon their business, save only our dear Mary, who was waiting for two poor women

who were to come and be relieved. As I entered the square I saw the women coming away with glad bright faces—they were women I had known in the past, and who I myself had recommended to Mary. I entered the house, and I found our sister in the room upon the right-hand side of the hall. I was about to greet her, and hoped to be able to break the terrible news to her, when I saw that her face was raised, her eyes were closed, her hands were clasped before her as if in prayer. She seemed to be listening, and waiting. Suddenly her eyes opened, her hands fell, and she came back to the world, seeing me standing before her."

" 'Brother,' she said, and her face was like the face of an angel, 'brother, there is one who needs me, needs my help and comfort in the hour of tribulation and sorrow. God has sent a message to me, and I go to her.'

"With that she left the room and went swiftly away."

"Without doubt," Joseph answered, "God has summoned her to bring consolation to the widow."

Hampson began a series of eager inquiries as to what had occurred in Berkeley Square, as to what would happen, and what action would be taken. A string of excited questions running one into another, which showed how terribly the good fellow was unstrung.

The Teacher checked the rapid flow of words with a single gesture.

"Brother," he said, "do you stay here and rest, and say no word to any man of what has happened. For me, there yet remains something to be done. I know not what; but this I do know—once more

message of the Holy Spirit is about to come to me, and I am to receive directions from on high."

Hampson watched the Teacher as he slowly left the room. At the door Joseph turned and smiled faintly at his old and valued friend; and as he did so, the journalist saw, with the old inexpressible thrill, that light upon the countenance which only came at the supreme moments when Heavenly direction was vouchsafed to Joseph.



Upon her wrist Mimi Addington wore a little jewelled watch set in a thin bracelet of aluminium studded with rubies.

She lifted her wrist almost to her eyes to mark the time. It was as though the power of eyesight was obscured.

Lord Ballina was walking, almost trotting, rapidly up and down the room—one has seen a captive wolf thus in its cage.

Andrew Levison sat upon the couch, his head supported upon his hands, one foot stretched a little in front of him, and the boot tapping with ceaseless, regular movement upon the heavy Persian rug.

"William is waiting at the garden gate to bring in the paper directly it arrives," Mimi Addington said.

No one answered her. Lord Ballina went up and down the room. Andrew Levison's foot, in its polished boot, went tap, tap, tap, as if it were part of a machine.

Then they heard it—the hoarse, raucous cry—"Evenin' Special! Slum Tragedy! 'Orrid Murder!" The words penetrated with a singular distinctness into

the tent-like Eastern room, with all its warmth and perfume.

Three sharp cries of relief and excitement were simultaneously uttered as the three people stood up in a horrid *tableau vivant* of fear and expectation.

Ten, twenty, thirty, forty seconds. "Oh, why does he not come?" And then the door opened quietly, and a discreet manservant brings in a folded pink paper upon a silver tray.

Mimi tears it open as the man withdraws, with a low and almost animal snarl of triumph. Her eyes blaze out like emeralds. The beautiful red lips are parted; hot breath pants out between them. Then she turns suddenly white as linen. The paper falls from her hands, the life fades from her face and eyes, the strength of movement from her limbs, and she giggles feebly, as one bereft of reason.

Lord Ballina snatches up the paper, scans it with rapid eyes, and then turns to Levison.

"They have killed the wrong man!" he says with a terrible oath. "They've murdered Sir Augustus Kirwan, and Joseph has gone free!"

Levison staggered towards him, leant on him, and read the shocking news for himself.

Lord Ballina began to weep noisily, like a frightened girl.

"It's all up with us," he said; "it's all up with us. This is the end of all of it, the hand of God is in it, we're done—lost, lost! There is no forgiveness!"

Even as he said this the hangings which covered the noiseless outside door were parted suddenly. Joseph himself stood there with one hand raised above his head, and said unto them—

"Peace be unto you all in this household!"

"Peace be unto you!"

The words, spoken in the teacher's deep and musical voice, rang out in the tented room like a trumpet.

The three conspirators were struck by them as if by some terrible crushing physical force.

With dilated eyes and faces, which were scarcely human in their terror, they crouched before the terrible apparition.

In that moment all remembrance of what they had just learnt from the newspaper was blotted from their minds; they only thought that here was one veritably risen from the dead, or come in spirit to denounce them.

The woman was the first to succumb. With a low, whimpering moan she fell in a tumbled heap upon the floor. Neither the Jew nor the younger man moved a finger to help her. They crouched trembling against the opposite wall, and stared at the tall figure of the man they had tried to murder.

Joseph stood looking upon them. His face was no index whatever to his thoughts. In whatever spirit he had come they could divine nothing of it from his face, though the words which he had uttered as he appeared from behind the hangings rang in their ears with a deep and ironical mockery as if the bell of doom was tolling for them.

Once more Joseph raised his hands.

"Peace be unto you," he said again, as if blessing them. And then he asked very gravely and calmly. "Why are you afraid of me?"

Again there was silence, until at last Levison, the Jew, with a tremendous and heroic effort of self-control, pulled himself a little together and essayed to speak.

"Do not prolong this scene, sir," he said, in cracked, dry voice, which seemed to come from a vast distance. "Have your men in at once and take us away. It will be better so. You have won the game, and we must pay the penalty. I suppose you have captured the men who made the attempt upon your life, and"—here Levison remembered, with an added throb of horror, how another had suffered in place of his intended victim—"and who, unfortunately killed another person in mistake for you. So be it. We are ready to go."

The sound of the Jew's voice speaking thus, and calm with all the hideous calmness of defeat and utter despair, had roused Lord Ballina's sinking consciousness. As Levison concluded, the young man fell upon his knees and almost crawled to the feet of the Master.

"It's all lies," he gasped—"it's all lies, sir! I don't know what he is talking about, with his murder and things. I know nothing whatever about it all. I wasn't in it. I assure you I'd nothing whatever to do with it. It was he who did it all."

The livid young wretch extended a shaking hand of cowardly accusation, and pointed it at his whilom friend.

Joseph looked down to the creature at his feet with a blazing scorn in his eyes, and as he did so the Jew, who was still leaning upon the opposite wall, as if too physically weak to move, broke in upon the end of Lord Ballina's quavering exculpation.

"It's quite true, sir," he said to Joseph, though even in the hour of his own agony the man's bitter contempt for the coward crept into his voice and chilled it. "It is perfectly true, this young—er—"

gentleman, Lord Ballina, knew nothing of the matters of which you speak. Nor can he be connected with the them in any way."

"Friend," said Joseph, very calmly, lifting his eyes from the thing that crouched upon the floor below him—"friend, of what matters have I spoken?"

Levison looked steadily at him. A puzzled expression crossed his terror-stricken face for a moment, and then left it as before.

"Why quibble about words," he said, "at such a time as this? I beg you, sir, to call in your detectives, and have me taken away at once. I, and I only, am responsible for the attempt upon your life."

Here there came a sudden and even more dramatic interruption than before. From the heap of shimmering draperies upon the floor by the couch, which covered the swooning body of the actress, a head suddenly protruded. It was like the head of a serpent coming slowly into view, with flashing eyes of enmity and hate.

Mum Addington rose with a slow and sinuous movement, a movement which, if she could have reproduced it in ordinary life, and showed it upon the stage, would, perhaps, have lifted her to the rank of the greatest tragedy actress of this or any other era.

The movement was irresistible, like the slow, gliding erection of a serpent. The head oscillated a little in front of the body, with a curiously reptilian movement. The eyes were fixed in their steady and unflinching glare of hate.

Levison stared, trembling, at the sudden and hideous apparition. All the beauty had faded from the face. It was as the face of one lost and doomed, the face of some malignant spirit from the very depths of despair.

Then a hollow, hissing voice filled the place.

"They are both wrong," said the voice; "they are both wrong. It was I who did this thing. I myself, and no other. Whatever you may be, man or spirit, I care not. It was I who set the men on to kill you, and the death that you were to die was all too easy for you. I hate you with a hatred for which there are no words. I would that I could inflict upon you a death lasting many days of torture, and do it with my hands. And then I would dance upon your grave. I hate you as woman never hated man before. Before all the world you spurned me and showed me as I am. You made me a laughing-stock to London and a shame in the eyes of all men."

Her lifted hand was extended towards the Teacher.

Spellbound, unable to move or think, Levison saw that the silken feet, from which the little bronze shoes had fallen, were gradually and imperceptibly moving with the apparent immobility of the trained dancer towards the tall figure by the door.

The awful voice went on, and into it, even in that moment of horrid tragedy which at the beginning had given it some dignity, a note of indescribable coarseness and vulgarity began to creep.

And all the time the Jew saw the little feet, in their stockings of pale blue silk, were moving nearer and nearer. Then, suddenly, she leapt at Joseph with a swift bound, like the bound of a panther, and without a single sound.

She struck once, twice, thrice; but as the Jew watched he saw with an awe and wonder more heart-stirring, more terrible than even the first agony of terror, that she struck at least a foot away from the figure of the Teacher—that is to say, her blows did not

reach within more than a foot of the grave, bearded man who stood regarding her. It was as though Joseph was surrounded by some invisible aura, some unseen protection, which rendered him invulnerable to all material attack. At the third stroke the woman's arm fell to her side. She looked in a puzzled, childlike way at the figure before her. The hate seemed to have suddenly been wiped from her face, as a sponge wipes a chalk mark from a slate. The light in her eyes was extinguished, they became dull and glassy; and in a feeble, childlike fashion she brushed past the teacher, now unimpeded by any obstacle, and passed through the draperies into the corridor beyond. They heard her laughing, in a mad and meaningless merriment—the laughter of one whose brain is finally dissolved and gone, and who will never more take part in the strife and councils of men and women.

The laughter grew quieter as the madwoman wandered away down the corridor.

Joseph stooped down to where Lord Ballina still crouched upon the floor. He placed both hands beneath the young man's arms and lifted him to his feet. He held him in front of him for a moment or two, and looked steadily into his eyes. Then, bending forward, he kissed him on the forehead.

"Brother," he said, "go, and sin no more."

The Jew heard the uncertain footsteps of the young viscount as he also left the tented room—heard them tap, tap as they crossed those spaces of the tiled floor of the hall which were not covered with rugs, and then a moment afterwards the clang of the hall door.

Joseph and Andrew Levison were left alone.

The Jew exercised his self-control in a still greater measure than before.

"And now, sir," he said, "since those two others have gone, and you have before you the real criminal, do with me as you will. I should like to ask you one thing, however, and that is this: I should like it to be thoroughly understood at the trial that I, and I only, am responsible for what has occurred. I am the murderer of Sir Augustus Kirwan, and should have been your murderer far more really and truly than the assassin whom I bribed to actually commit the deed. I was the controlling brain and the instigator of the whole thing. Therefore I hope that, guilty as my instrument may be, it will be recognized by everybody concerned that he is not guilty to such an extent as I am guilty. It would be an additional misery to me, though I don't put it only on those grounds, if my creature also were to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. And now I am quite ready."

Joseph turned, as Levison thought, to summon the police officers whom he supposed had accompanied him.

Instead of doing that, Joseph closed the door and pulled the hangings over it.

"Why did you seek to murder me?" he asked, in calm and gentle tones.

Levison began to tremble.

"It will seem incredible to you, sir," he said, in a low voice, "but you stood in my way. You were destroying my business as a theatrical manager, and you had very greatly angered my leading lady, the woman who tried to kill you again just now."

Then, suddenly, the whirling brain of the theatrical manager remembered the significance of what he had seen when Mimi Addington had dashed at the Teacher with hate and murder in her eye.

"Who are you?" he said, terror mastering him once more. "Who are you that Mimi could not reach you? Who are you? And how, now I come to think of it, how could you be here so soon? What can it all mean? Who are you?"

"Like you," the Teacher answered, "I am a son of God. For me, as for you, Christ Jesus died upon the Cross. You ask me questions, I will answer them. There is no reason why I should not answer them. When I came to this house I had no idea whom I should see, save only that here I should find those who had plotted against my life. I was brought here by a Power stronger than any human power. I was brought here by the hand of God Who—blessed be His name!—orders my way and directs my path. And as for your accomplice, the poor man who would have struck me down, and who has slain one of the great ones of this earth, and one who might have been a witness to the truth of God and the love of mankind, I know that he will not be found. He has not been discovered, nor will he ever be by human agency. He will pay the penalty for what he has done, as all must pay the penalty for evil deeds, in sorrow and remorse. It may be that he will not repent, and will not be forgiven. Of that I cannot speak, because no knowledge has been vouchsafed to me. It may be, and I pray to the Holy Trinity that it shall be so—that he will repent and be forgiven, because he knew not what he did."

"But you know, sir," Levison answered—"you know who has been behind it all. Take me swiftly, and do what has to be done. I beg and implore you to delay no longer. I can make no defence, nor shall I try to do so. Who you are, and what power is given

to you, I don't know, nor can I understand. But this one thing I know—that I am guilty, and am prepared to pay the penalty for what I have done. I will go with you from this sin-stricken house ! ”

“ Yes,” Joseph answered, “ my brother, you will go with me, but not as you think, to the hands of human law. It is not God's will that you should suffer for what you have done at the hands of human justice. His will towards you is very different, and I am come to be the humble instrument of it. You will come with me, as you say ; but you will come with me to my own house, there to make your repentance before Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees, and asking for forgiveness for your great sin and for grace to live a new live in the future, henceforth serving Him and bearing the weight of the Cross which He bore for you so long ago, until at last, in His good will and time, you may be gathered up and join the blessed company of those saved by Christ's precious blood.”

The deep, grave words roused the long dormant religious instinct in the heart of the worldly financier who stood broken and abject before him. The Jew remembered the days of his youth, when he also had prayed to the Lord of Hosts and the God of Israel in the synagogue of his parents. In one swift burst of remembrance the times came back to him when he had bound the phylacteries upon his forehead, and heard the priests of Israel reading from the Holy Book of the Law. He saw in a sudden riot of memory the solemn hours of Passover, tasted the forgotten savour of days of fasting, performed the holy ablutions of his faith. And now he heard from the lips of the man whom he had tried to murder, news of that other religion which he had scorned and derided all his life, and yet

which was but the fulfilment of the prophecies of his own. One had come to him preaching the Messiah Whom he had spurned—the Jew Who was both God and Man, and Whose Agony had saved the world.

Levison bowed his head in his hands and wept.

"And you," he said, between his sobs, "if indeed God can forgive me for the evil that I have done, how can you forgive me? I have never spoken to you, yet I hated you because you had come into my theatre and disturbed my life and taken the profits of my business away from me. But you have not done to me a tithe of the evil I would have done to you. You came to me, knowing well my evil life and that I pandered to the passions of the low and the debased. You did what I now see the Lord commanded you to do. But I—How can you forgive me, Master?"

"Brother," Joseph answered, "it is a very little thing for me to forgive you. It is nothing, and is no merit in me. I have no anger towards you in my heart. What you did you did, and it was a sin for which you must answer to the Almighty. But I am well aware that you walked in darkness, and had not seen the Light. If our beloved Master Jesus could forgive the men who nailed Him to the Cross, should not His humble and unworthy follower forgive what you have done? Brother, I forgive you with all my heart. Accept my forgiveness and my love, and come with me, that you may learn more of Him who is above the thrones and principalities and powers of this earth; of Him who is not only justice, but mercy and tenderness inexpressible; of Him to Whom all men are equal, Who loveth all men."

They passed out of the scented room and into the silent hall, where no servants or others were about.

Together they left that house, to which neither were ever to return ; that house in which so many and strange things had been done, and which now seemed as a house of the dead.

A carriage was waiting at the garden gate. The two men entered it and it rolled swiftly away down the hill towards London.

It was now quite dark.

The oppression of the thunder seemed to have passed away, and the air was fresh and cool as they drove through the roaring, lighted streets of the great Babylon towards the Brothers' house in Bloomsbury. Once or twice, as the carriage halted in a block of traffic, Levison saw the newspaper boys holding the startling contents sheets before them, and the tragic headlines met his eye. At such times he shuddered like a leaf in the wind, and the tears of remorse and agony rolled down his cheeks unregarded, splashing upon his ringed hands.

Then Joseph would lean towards him and speak quietly in his ear. "Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him ; I will set him up because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him ; yea, I am with him in trouble ; I will deliver him and bring him to honour. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."

They came at last to the house of the Brothers, but as the carriage turned into the square, there was a sudden roar from many hundreds of voices. An enormous crowd had collected before the house, stirred to the depths by the news of the terrible tragedy which had occurred in the afternoon.

Almost immediately that the carriage began to

move among the crowd, some electric wave of feeling seemed to pass over every one, and they all knew that the Teacher was among them.

Then, from every voice rose up a great chorus of joy and thanksgiving. A crashing harmony of praise rent the very air, and caused the people in far distant squares and thoroughfares to turn their heads and listen in amaze.

The Master had returned, safe and unharmed—the Master whose name and power were already thrilling the metropolis as it was never thrilled before ; the God-guided Teacher who was bringing new light into the lives of thousands, building a great dam against the threatening tides of sin, evil and death.

With great difficulty the carriage made its way to the spacious door, which was immediately flung open, showing the lighted hall and the Brothers, with Hampson, the journalist, among them, standing there to welcome the man that they revered and loved.

Together Levison and the Master entered. But ere the door was closed Joseph turned and raised his hand. In a moment a dead silence fell over the crowd.

"Brethren," the deep voice thrilled, "I will be with you in a moment, for I have somewhat to say to you."

Then the door closed.

Joseph took the trembling creature by his side into a little warm and lighted room.

"Brother," he said, "the hour of your repentance is at hand. Kneel and pray to the **Man** of Sorrows, and if no words come to you, call upon Him by name, and He will come—Jesus ! Jesus ! Jesus !"

Then, turning, he went out to the crowd.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONSOLIDATION

A MONTH had passed by. For a fortnight after the death of Sir Augustus Kirwan the Press had been full of surmise and conjecture. New theories as to the identity of the murderer were advanced every day. Every now and again some enterprising journal would appear with a column of exclusive news, which pointed to the fact that the criminal was discovered through the acumen of the journal's own private detectives, and was certain to be arrested in two days at least. He never was arrested, and two days afterwards some new sensation drew a red herring across the old trail, while the public read on and were perfectly content, provided that they were thrilled.

It was generally agreed, however, by Press and public alike, that Sir Augustus Kirwan had not been the real object of attack, but that the shot had been aimed at Joseph the evangelist. This general certainty had marked a definite effect upon the way in which the Teacher was regarded. The hostility of the unthinking mob was disarmed by it. It became known to the great mass of the common people that whatever Joseph might be, whatever impossible doctrines he might preach, his one idea was to alleviate the miseries

and sorrows of the poor, not only in a spiritual, but also in a solid, concrete, and material fashion.

Opposition still continued, of course, but the tragedy in the East End had broken it up into separate camps, and there was no longer a steady tide of enmity, such as there had been at the commencement of the evangelist's stupendous mission to London.

On the night of the murder itself an event had occurred which was very far-reaching in its consequences, though at the moment none of those who were present quite realized the significance of what they heard. The Teacher had appeared upon the steps of his house in Bloomsbury, and had addressed the enormous crowd during the early part of the night. This crowd had been attracted to the square by the news published in the evening papers of Sir Augustus' murder and Joseph's escape. They had congregated there out of curiosity, in the first instance; but when Joseph had appeared in a carriage, together with a stranger, there had been a spontaneous outburst of genuine affection from the many-throated multitude.

It was as though every person there, whether he had seen the evangelist before or not, was genuinely glad at his escape, felt that sense of personal brotherhood and love, that ungrudging recognition of a high and noble nature whose aims were purely unselfish, which now and then is vouchsafed to an assembly to feel, and which, in the psychology of crowds, is the very highest manifestation of cumulative feeling.

Then had come a short but enormously powerful and heart-searching address.

There was a note of great sadness in it, so some of the most sensitive members of the crowd imagined, a note heralding a farewell, though, on after reflection,

it was supposed that the terrible events of the afternoon had naturally disturbed and unstrung the teacher in a very great degree.

The peculiar note which the address had struck was that which made it a very special occasion in the history of Joseph's mission to London. It was not only an exhortation to the people there to repent and seek forgiveness at the foot of the Cross, it was not only an exhortation to each member of the crowd to live a holy life and walk in the ways of the Lord—it was all this, but there was something more, and something new.

Joseph had, as if with the certainty of most absolute confidence, bidden every person there from that moment to go out into the world as a definite minister of the Gospel. It was as though addressing a congregation of known and tried disciples, whom he knew would obey his behests and carry out his wishes. So some great captain might have spoken to his officers, delivering them a special mission.

"Go out, my dear brothers, this very night, as ministers of the Word of God, to spread the knowledge of Him in London. Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost."

With fiery words he called upon them to deny themselves all things, to break off all associations with evil and worldly things which warred against the soul; to do their work, whatever it might be, to the glory of God, and to spend every moment of their spare time in a definite, individual campaign against the hosts of evil.

The burning eloquence of his words, short as was the time during which he spoke to them, made a deep

impression upon many hundreds there. The dark square, with its tall lamp-posts around, and the glow of yellow light which poured from the door of the great house, the deep organ-note of London's traffic all around, the whole strangeness and mystery of the scene, could never be forgotten by any one who witnessed it. And in the result it had actually happened that in that single evening the power of the Teacher's words had keyed up lives that were faltering between good and evil, had sown the seed of righteousness in barren and empty hearts, had sent out a veritable company far and wide over London, who, each in his own way, and with the measure of his powers and capacity, became a minister of Jesus.

"Was it not, indeed, true?" many righteous men and women asked themselves during the ensuing month, when the leaven was working in strange and unexpected directions. "Was it not, indeed, true that down upon that crowd of Londoners some portion of the Holy Spirit had descended, some sacred fire which, even as the fires of Pentecost themselves, had again repeated the miracle which was prophesied by the prophet Joel?"

All over London, among thinking Christians, there came an acute conviction that it was indeed true that one specially guided and gifted of God was among them. A man was in their midst to whom the Holy Spirit was given in abounding and overflowing measure, and who, like Enoch, walked with God. And many lovers of Jesus felt that perhaps now, indeed, the time was come when once more the Almighty Father would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh—the time when their sons and their daughters should prophesy, the young men see visions, and the old men dream dreams.

Was it not true now, as it ever had been, that "who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved?"

And so, during the month which had gone by since the tragedy in Whitechapel, the fame of the Master had grown and grown, until it had become less of the breathless sensation which it had appeared at first, and had settled down into a definite and concrete thing.

It was at this juncture that two articles appeared in two newspapers. One was an article signed "Eric Black" in the *Daily Wire*, another one written by Hampson, the editor of the *Sunday Friend*.

The *Daily Wire* was, of course, the leading popular daily paper of England. The *Sunday Friend*, under Hampson's editorship, and especially since the advent of the evangelist, had become an enormous power among all definitely Christian people.

The article of Eric Black in the *Daily Wire* was far less enthusiastic in tone than that written by Hampson, Joseph's old and trusted friend. It was very judicial in manner, and from this very circumstance it gained an additional weight, and had, perhaps, even a greater influence than the other.

Eric Black, the brilliant young journalist, had never faltered in his resolve to follow the banner of Christ since the night when, with his own eyes, he saw the man of God raise up the sufferer from his sick bed. At the same time, Black, far more than Hampson, was a man of the world, a young, brilliant, and modern man of the world. He realized that in order to make the Kingdom of Heaven intelligible it was most certainly necessary to understand the kingdom of this world as well. To plant the good seed in the waiting ground one must not only

know all about the seed itself, but must be acquainted with the properties and qualities of the ground in which it is destined to fructify.

In thoroughly understanding this, the journalist, in his great summing-up article of the work of Joseph the evangelist, had refrained from enthusiastic comment, and had merely stated and made a record of indubitable, incontrovertible fact.

Never before, during the time of the Teacher's ministry, had there been a concise epitome of its events, its progress, and its results.

London, and all England, indeed, was supplied with such a document now, and even the most thoughtless were compelled to pause and wonder what these things might mean.

Every instance of the supernormal happening—Eric Black refused the word supernatural, and substituted for it the wiser and more comprehensive word—was tabulated, set forth in detail, and attested by the affidavits of witnesses whose bona fides could not be doubted.

The enormous charities which had begun to be active under the ægis of the teacher were explained and discussed, and in one day London was amazed to learn of great fortunes which were being deflected from their old paths and were pouring their benefits to relieve the necessities of the downtrodden and oppressed. Names and sums were given, and the man in the street gasped as he realized the tremendous force of a personality which had already captured millions of money for the work and service of God.

If some of the wealthiest and most celebrated men in England had gladly given up a great part of that which they possessed for the benefit of others, was

there not, indeed, something beyond all ordinary explanation in this stupendous fact?

Perhaps, indeed, such occurrences as these impressed the great mass of the public more even than the supernormal occurrences to which Black's famous article bore witness. To the mind of the ordinary self-seeking man there is something far more wonderful in the fact of a man with a hundred pounds giving seventy-five of it away to other people, without hope of earthly reward or wish for earthly praise and recognition, than even the appearance of an angel in the sky heralding the second coming of Our Lord would probably be.

The brain of each single unit of the human race is exactly what he has made it by a long series of habits and thoughts directed to one object. It is not more wonderful that the sot and low-minded man cannot appreciate beautiful music or perfect scenery than it is that the self-centred intellect is unable to accept the evidence for the unseen or realize that this life is but a phantom that will pass away.

Both the article of Eric Black and that written by the editor of the *Sunday Friend* finally summed up the difference that the arrival of Joseph in the Modern Babylon had made to existing conditions.

The theatres of the bad sort, which pandered to the lower instincts of those who patronized them, were almost empty. Several of them were closed, "for the production of a new play." A strong agitation was going on in Parliament to make it prohibitive for women to be employed in the drinking saloons and bars of London. In vast areas the preachers of the Brotherhood had reduced the gambling evil among the poorer classes to a most appreciable extent.

The working man was being taught by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, as manifested in Joseph's followers, and by the inexorable law of quiet logic and common-sense, to turn his attention from the things of to-day and the immediate amusement of the moment, to the future of his soul. The greatest work of all was, perhaps, accomplished in this direction, and it was found that once the ordinary intelligence was convinced of the existence of a future state, the ordinary intelligence saw immediately the necessity for preparing for eternity during this short and finite life.

London, day by day, hour by hour almost, was growing more serious. The churches were filling once more, especially and markedly those in which there was a daily celebration of the Eucharist. A great wave of religious feeling was sweeping over the metropolis. And on all sides the cry of the ignorant and the desirous was heard—

"What shall we do to be saved?"

Some two days after the month which had elapsed since the murder of Sir Augustus, Sir Thomas Ducaine sat in his library, talking earnestly to Hampson the journalist.

Ever since the first night when the two strangely opposite natures had met at the Frivolity Theatre the friendship between the millionaire baronet and the humble journalist had grown and strengthened. Then had come Sir Thomas' conversion to the truth, his public confession of Christ, which had welded the bond of friendship between the two men into something that only death itself could end in this world, but to renew it in the next.

Lady Kirwan had retired to the great family country-

house in Hertfordshire, a broken and unhappy woman. She had refused to see Joseph or even Sir Thomas Ducaine again, persisting in her attitude of absolute hostility to the Teacher and all his friends. Marjorie Kirwan had become quietly engaged to the Duke of Dover.

Lady Kirwan—and this was the worst of all—had turned against her niece, Mary Lys. The will of Sir Augustus had come as an enormous surprise to the world. No one had realized how wealthy the financier was, and his testamentary dispositions had startled everybody.

Trustees were placed in the possession of a million of money, which was to be handed over to his daughter upon her marriage. Lady Kirwan had a life interest in almost an equal sum. When she died this vast property was to go to her niece Mary Lys without any conditions whatever. Two hundred thousand pounds had been left to the influential committee of trustees which now administered the great sums of money which had been given or left to Joseph and his brethren.

The position of Mary was, therefore, a very strange one. She had become one of the greatest heiresses in England, she was engaged to Sir Thomas Ducaine, but nothing would induce her aunt to see her or hold any communication with her. At first the poor girl had thought of returning to the hospital in the East End for a time, but another way had been found out of the difficulty.

Lady Susan Wells, an elderly spinster, a daughter of the Earl of Fakenham, and aunt to Sir Thomas Ducaine, had asked Mary to live with her at her house in Belgrave Square. The plan had been adopted, and

Mary was still able, owing to this arrangement, to actively assist in Joseph's work, and carry on her life of sweet self-sacrifice and help.

Sir Thomas and Hampson sat on each side of the library fire.

"Joseph ought to be here now," Hampson remarked.

Sir Thomas nodded and said:

"I feel to-night as if something very important were going to happen. Neither of us have seen Joseph for four days now. Nobody, in fact, has seen him, and nobody knows what he has been doing. One of his strange disappearances and withdrawals from the rush of life has taken place again. When that occurs we always know something is going to happen."

"He has been communing with God," Hampson answered gravely, and even as he spoke the butler opened the door, and the tall figure of the Master entered.

Joseph looked very thin and pale. He seemed a man who had but lately come through days of deep suffering.

Sir Thomas rose.

"Ah, my friend," he said, "we were speaking of you at this moment, and wondering what you had to tell us. We got your letter, of course, and we knew that you had some very important thing to say. Come and tell us what it is."

"My brothers," Joseph answered, his face beaming with love and sadness as he looked upon them both, "I come to tell you of the end!"

CHAPTER XXIV

SUPREME MOMENTS

THE dawn came.

The sun rose over the still, grey sea, and the first rays which flashed out over the brim of the world shone in through the open window of the little bedroom.

It was a simple cottage room. The walls were whitewashed, the appointments were primitive, and the fresh light of morning fell upon the little truckle-bed in which a young man lay sleeping.

One arm rested behind his head, another was flung carelessly over the counterpane. The sun touched a strong, clean-shaven face, a face clear-cut as a cameo, with resolution in every line, and with a curious happiness lying upon it, even as the sunlight touched it.

Thomas Ducaine was sleeping in the little cottage room of the Welsh village, where he had come for the great day of his life.

As the sun touched the young and noble face, the head moved a little, and the firm mouth parted in a happy smile. As they will in dreams, towards the end of both sleep and dreaming, the events of the last day or two were summing themselves up in the sub-conscious brain, just before consciousness itself

was about to return, and the eyes open upon the happy day.

Over the sea the sun rose, the sea-birds winged above the smooth water with shrill, joyous voices, the little ozone-laden breeze eddied upon the foreshore, and found its way into the room of the sleeping man.

Then, as day began to move and stir, and all the happy world of Wales prepared to greet it, Sir Thomas Ducaine opened his eyes and awoke.

For moment or two he lay looking round him with eyes which still held part of the deep mystery of sleep, and then at last everything came back to him. He sat up in the bed, the colour mounted to his cheeks, and as he turned his face towards the window and saw the brilliant but still sleeping glory of the early-rising sun and quiet sea, he buried his face in his hands and prayed.

For this was the morning of his life, the morning of all mornings; there would never be another morning like this.

A week ago Joseph had come to him in the night. Pale, wan, and wearied, yet still with the inextinguishable fires of the Spirit shining through his eyes, informing all his movements and words, Joseph had come to him with a solemn message.

The Master had told him that, despite all that had happened, although to the world of society and convention he and Mary were still in the depths of mourning, it was necessary that they should put all these material and social considerations on one side, and that their love should be sealed and signed by the blessing of the Church—that the time of the singing of the birds had come, that wedlock awaited them.

And so, without further questioning, Thomas and

Mary obeyed the voice of the man who had had so stupendous an influence upon their lives, and gave the direction of their actions into his keeping. Both of them were certain that what their beloved Teacher ordained for them was just and right. Nay, more than that, they knew that the words of Joseph, which ordered their doings, were more than the words of a mere man; that, as always, the Holy Spirit informed them.

The sun poured into the humble room, filling it with amber light and the fresh breeze of the dawn.

Thomas Ducaine leapt from his bed, and went to the low window. Leaning his arms upon the sill, he breathed in the gracious, welcoming air, and looked out over the ocean to the far horizon, with eyes that were dim with happy gratitude and gracious tears.

Yes, this, indeed, was the day of days. The morning of all mornings had come!

Leaning out of the window, he saw the curve of little whitewashed houses which fringed the bay. The fishers' boats rocked at anchor beyond the granite mole, and far at the end of the village his eyes fell upon another whitewashed cottage. As he saw it once more, he placed his hands before his face and sent up a deep and fervent petition to the Almighty that he might indeed be worthy of the precious and saintly maiden whom he knew was sleeping there in her sweet innocence.

This was the morning of mornings!

When the sun had risen higher in the heavens, he would walk to the little granite-walled, slate-roofed church. Mary would meet him there, and Joseph and the brethren who had accompanied the Teacher from London back to their old beloved home. And

there, without pomp or ceremony, noise of publicity, or the rout and stir of a great company, he would place his hand in the hand of the girl he loved, and the old village Priest would make them one for ever in this world and the next, and afterwards give them the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

Behind the cottages the great mountains towered up into the sky. One purple peak, still covered at the summit by a white curtain of cloud, was the mountain where Lluellyn Lys, the brother of Mary, lay in sleep.

Thomas could see the mountain from the cottage, and as his eyes travelled up the green and purple sides to the mysterious cap which hid the top, he remembered all that he had heard about it, and looked upward with an added interest and awe.

For this was the mountain upon which Joseph had first met the mysterious recluse of the hills who had changed him from what he had been to what he was. This was the modern Sinai, where the Master had communed with God. Here he had gathered together his disciples, had preached to them with the voice which the Holy Spirit had given him, and blessed them, and led them to the conquest of London, to the Cross.

Yes, it was there, on those seemingly inaccessible heights, that the great drama of Joseph's life had begun, and it was there that the drama of his life—the life of Thomas Ducaine—was to receive its seal and setting.

After the marriage and the simple feast, which was to be held in the village, they were all to climb the heights and there, up in the clouds, Joseph was to bless them and give them, so it was said, whispered, and understood, a special message.

The bridegroom left the window, knelt down at his bedside, and prayed. This complex, young, modern gentleman—a product of every influence which makes for subtlety and decadence of brain and body—knelt down and said his prayers with the simplicity of a child. Despite his vast wealth, his upbringing as a young prince of modern England, Thomas Ducaine had lived a life far more pure and unspotted than almost any of his contemporaries. It was that fact, so patent in his face and manner, which had first attracted Hampson to him, when the two had met in the Frivolity Theatre—how long ago that seemed now!

So the young man with great possessions said the Lord's Prayer in the fresh morning light, and then prayed most earnestly that he might be worthy of the gift that God had given him—the love of the sweetest, purest, and loveliest lady in the land.

He prayed that God would be pleased to bless their union at the supreme moment which was now so imminent, and for ever afterwards. His whole heart and soul went up to the throne of the Most High in supplication for himself and the girl who was to be his wife. That they might live together in godly and righteous wedlock; that they might spend their lives, and the wealth which had been given them, for the good of others and for the welfare of the world; that at the last they might be gathered up in the company of the elect, might tread the shining pavements of Heaven, and see the face of God—these were the prayers of the young man as, like a knight of old, he kept the vigil before the Sacrament which was to come.

He went down to the little sleeping cove and bathed

in the fresh, clear water of the sea. The right arm rose and fell forcefully, conquering an element, as rejoicing in his strength, rejoicing in the glory of the morning, rejoicing in the sense that God was with him, and that His blessing was upon his doings, he swam out into the sea, laughing aloud with holy rapture at what was, what was to come, and what would be.

Then, once more, he re-entered the little cottage, and found the old Welsh woman who was his hostess preparing the simple breakfast meal. She put the girdle cakes, fresh eggs and milk before him, but he stood, looking down upon the board, and, turning to her, refused to eat.

"No," he said, "I will go fasting to my wedding. I will eat no earthly food until I take the Body and Blood of Jesus from the Priest's hand. It will be afterwards that the feast comes."

"Oh, my dear," she answered, in her broken English—"my dear, that's right of ye, though indeed and indeed I should wish you would take something. But you are right—my dear, go to your love fasting, and you will never fast more."

Another door, opening into the little rafted kitchen, was pushed aside, and Hampson entered.

His face was white and pinched. All night long the little man had been wrestling with the last remnants of the old Adam which remained within him. From the moment when the gracious lady who was about to become the bride of his dear friend had saved him from death, the journalist had loved Mary with a dog-like fidelity and adoration. He knew, as he had known at that moment when he had been with her upon the roof of England's great cathedral,

and seen the white cross hanging over London, that she could never, under any possible circumstances, have been his.

He had known this and realized it always, but upon this last night of her maidenhood, when she was about to finally and irrevocably join her life to another's, there had been mad hours of revolt, of natural, human revolt, in his brain.

Now it was all over. He had passed through the Valley of the Shadow, and the morning was come.

For Mr. Harrison also the morning of all mornings was come, the morning when he had finally and utterly laid down his own desires at the foot of the Cross, had bowed to the will of the Almighty, and found himself filled with sacred joy in the joy of the two people he loved better than anyone else in the world, save only his dear Master, Joseph.

In his hand the little man held a book bound in crimson leather. It was the Revised Version of the New Testament, the latest product of the University Press, and a very beautiful specimen of typography and binding.

He came up to his friend and shook him warmly by the hand. Then he gave him the book.

"Thomas," he said, "there is nothing that I can give you that you have not got. And, of course, it would be silly of me to give you anything of material value, because all those things you have had from your youth up. But here is my little offering. It is only the New Testament. I have written something upon the fly-leaf, and if you will use it constantly instead of any other copy that you may have, it will be a great joy to me. Indeed, my dear fellow," he continued with a smile, "I can give you nothing more valuable than this."

There was a moment of tense emotion, which was broken, and fortunately broken, by the voice of the old Welsh woman.

"Now then, my dear," she said, "you are not going to be married this morning, so you will take your breakfast—indeed, you must an' all. The bells will be ringing soon, but not for you, and so you must keep your body warm with food."

Hampson sat down to the simple meal.

Thomas Ducaine, carrying the crimson volume in his hand, went out into the sunlight, which was now becoming brilliant and strong. He walked down the silent village street, his feet stirring up the white dust as he went, for it had been long since rain had fallen in the Welsh village, and strolled to the end of the mole which stretched out into the blue sea. Standing there, he breathed in the marvellous invigorating air of the morning, and his whole young, fresh body responded to the appeal which nature made.

This was the morning of mornings!

In a few short hours—how short, how blissfully short!—Mary would come to him . . . There were no words in which to clothe his thoughts or in which to voice his thankfulness and joy. He surveyed his past life rapidly and swiftly. It passed before him in a panoramic vista, full of colour, but blurred and unimportant until the wonderful night when, as he stood at the door of his house in Piccadilly with Hampson, the tall figure of the Teacher had suddenly appeared out of the night, and had entered into his house with blessing and salvation.

From that time onwards, the vista of happenings was more detailed, more definitely clear. He realized that he owed, not only his present material felicity—

the fact that all his hopes and desires were to be consummated in the little village church before the sun had reached his midday height—but also all the new spiritual awakening, the certainty of another life, the hope of eternal blessedness, to one cause, to one personality.

It was at this moment to Joseph that his thoughts went, to that strange force and power—more force and power, indeed, than that of mere human man—which, or who, had changed his life from a dull and hopeless routine—how he realized that now!—to this beatitude of morning light, of love to the world, and thankfulness to God.

Joseph was somewhere in the neighbourhood, that he knew. Where exactly the Teacher was he could not say. Mary was staying at the little cottage, which he could see as he sent his eyes roving round the semicircle of white houses which fringed the bay, with her aunt, Lady Susan Wells. Hampson was to be “best man.” Bridesmaids there were none. It was to be the simplest of all ceremonies.

This prince of modern London was to be married to one of the greatest heiresses in England, and a member of one of the oldest families in the United Kingdom, as Colin might marry Audrey—happily, quietly, and far from the view of the world.

Whether Joseph himself would be present at the ceremony even Ducaine himself was not quite certain. That after the wedding-feast—the simple wedding-feast—they were all to meet Joseph upon the mountain-top, he was well aware. It had been arranged, and he thrilled with anticipation of some further and more wonderful revelation of the designs of the Almighty than had ever been vouchsafed to him before. But at

the church—he hoped the Teacher would be present in the little village church when he and Mary were made one.

He turned to walk back to the cottage, when down the granite pier he saw that a little flaxen-haired girl was walking. In all the sleeping semicircle of the village Thomas and the little girl seemed alone to be awake.

The blue wood-smoke was rising from the chimneys of the cottages, but as yet no one was stirring in the outside air.

The little girl came tripping and laughing along the granite isthmus between the waters, and in her hand she held a folded piece of paper.

With the confiding innocence of childhood, she came straight up to the tall young man, and stretching out her tiny arm, looked into his face.

"You are Thomas, aren't you?" she said.

"Yes," he answered, "I am Thomas."

"Then this is for you, Thomas," she replied. "This letter an' all. Dadda was up in the mountain this morning, and William Rees, whateffer, met dadda, and gave him this letter, which Mr. Joseph had given him. The Teacher is staying up in the little house on the mountain-top where Lluellyn Lys used to live, and he gave this to William Rees, and William Rees gave it to dadda, and dadda told me to find you and give it to you, Thomas."

Ducaine opened the letter. These were the words:—

"I shall not be with you in body when you and Mary are made one. But I shall be with you in the spirit, my dear friend. When you have made your Communion and kept the feast come up with the Brethren

to the mountain-top. There I will bless you. And now, farewell ! ”

* * * *

“ Therefore, if any man can show any just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

* * * *

“ . . . I pronounce that they be man and wife joined together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. . . . God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you ; the Lord mercifully look upon you, and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting.”

* * * *

Arm in arm they went out from the little church joined together, man and wife, for ever and a day, the good'y young man and the girl with the face of an angel.

The fiddlers who were waiting set up a merry tune, as, surrounded by their humble friends, they walked to the tithe-barn in which the marriage feast was to be held.

As they all stood waiting till the signal to fall should be given, Thomas Ducaine took his wife's hand in his, bowed over it, and kissed it in graceful chivalry.

Then he drew her to him and kissed her on the lips.

The music broke out once more as all the company sat down. It was a short and merry feast, yet

untainted with the Celtic sadness which all the Welsh folk feel at happy moments.

One and all, from bride and bridegroom down to the humblest worker there, knew that there were more stirring and awful things to come; that a trumpet was sounding on the mountain summit; that they were to climb as if into the presence of the Almighty.

Old David Owen, Joseph's trusted lieutenant, lifted on high a great goblet of the pure mountain water, in which he pledged the newly-married pair.

"I pledge you," he said, "Mary and Thomas, brother and sister in the Lord, followers of our dear Teacher—I pledge you and call upon all that are present here to join me in the toast. May your life together be one long song of happiness! May you, with all the opportunities that God has given you, always remain true to the trust reposed in you, and follow the banner of Jesus, and once more plunge into the battle for the winning over of Babylon to the Lord!"

Then the old man paused, and, setting down his glass, placed his hands upon the table, and, leaning forward, spoke very earnestly and quietly, rather to the assembled company than to the married pair.

"The Master," he said, "is not with us now; but we are going to meet him, and I doubt not we are all to receive another signal proof of the Lord's favour. To some of us it has been a grief that Joseph was not in the church when the marriage was made of the two we love. But Joseph's ways are not our ways, and he is led as we are not led. But I would say this to you, dear brethren and sisters. I see around me those who a long time ago—it seems a very long time ago—accompanied the Master from these hills to the great modern Babylon of our time. There is no one here who

does not remember the saint of the mountain, Lluellyn Lys. There is no one here who has not known the circumstances under which our Teacher first came down to these parts. I mind well that I was one of those who carried him up the mountain, ill and crippled as he was. And it was through that strange fellowship of Joseph and Lluellyn that the things have come to pass. We all assembled on the mountain-top where we are going soon, to bury Lluellyn, and we all heard our Master as he took on the mantle of Elijah and called us to rally round the standard of Jesus with him as leader. And now we are all going once more to that sacred spot on the top of Pendrydos, and God grant that we may hear inspiring and edifying things there. I have just pledged Thomas and Mary as our brother and our sister in the fight we are waging, and have still to wage, against the sins of the great city so far away from here. I pledge them in the name of you all, and as our brother and our sister. But it would ill become me not to say a word upon another part of the question. We must remember that Thomas, our brother, is also Sir Thomas Ducaine, a man of great fortune and of high lineage. We must also remember that Mary, our sister, was Miss Mary Lys, the sister of Lluellyn Lys, and the descendant of the old kings of Wales who ruled these parts. Just as they are leaders of our band in Christ, so also are they leaders in the great things of this world, and we owe them a double loyalty.

He stopped for a moment, and the old face worked as he thought deeply. Then with a wild, free Celtic gesture, he threw out one hand.

"I can say no more," he said; "but you all know what they are, and who they are. God bless them for our natural leaders and our friends in the Lord! And

now, what think you, shall we not climb the mountain?"

It is a steep road from the little village through the pine plantations, until one comes out upon the mountain-side itself. At that point a green gorge stretches up between two spurs of the hill above, a green gorge covered with soft, pneumatic turf cropped like a lawn by the innumerable sheep which range over those high pastures. And then on and up, through the pleasant, slanting valley, until the heather-covered plateau is reached.

There one surveys a vast expanse of wild and lonely moor, all purple, green, and brown. At huge distances great peaks rise up—the peaks of the Snowdon range—and on clear moments the white and glistening cap of the emperor mountain of Wales shines in its distant majesty.

So they went out into the sunshine, and wound their way through the lower slopes of the pines quietly and gravely, without many words, but with the quickening sense of hope and anticipation strong in each rugged and faithful heart.

Upon the great green gorge they made their way, a skein of black figures. Before them all Sir Thomas and Lady Ducaine walked together. The bridegroom was dressed in a simple suit of tweed, and with a soft grey hat upon his head. The bride wore an ordinary coat and skirt, like any mountaineering lady who has essayed the heights upon a brilliant day.

As they went together, a little in advance of the main company, they spoke hardly a word to each other. But their faces were eloquent. In the man's eyes there was a thankfulness so supreme and perfect that the girl's filled with tears when she looked at that serene

and radiant face. With no word said, they knew that they were now each other's for ever and ever. All toil, all trouble, all heart-burnings, heart-searching and sorrow were over. Nothing could ever alter the great central fact : they were married, they were one spirit, one body, one for ever in the sight of earth and Heaven, one in the high endeavour of good which was to be the purpose and completion of their lives.

"Are you happy, dear?" he said to her once, turning his radiant face upon her.

She looked at him for a moment without speaking and he knew that he had never seen her more beautiful, and perhaps never would see her more beautiful again, than she was at that moment.

"Oh, my life and my love," she answered, "I did not know that God could give such happiness in this world!"

And as she finished, fifty yards below them upon the mountain-side they heard that the Brethren who accompanied them were bursting into sudden song, into spontaneous chords of music, a wedding anthem for them.

O Lord of life and love,
Come Thou again to-day;
And bring a blessing from above
That ne'er shall pass away.

O bless, as erst of old,
The bridegroom and the bride;
Bless with the holier stream that flow'd
Forth from Thy pierced side.

Before Thine altar-throne
This mercy we implore;
As Thou dost knit them, Lord, in one
So bless them evermore."

As the crashing, rolling chords ceased and echoed far away among the purple mountains, they found that they had come into the higher lands and were upon the last mountain moorland, from which before them the granite peak of their final endeavour rose stark and awful, its head still hidden by the clouds.

And then, as they moved towards the steep path among the boulders and the slate terraces a change came over the spirits of all of them. It was not a chill of depression, but rather a sense of awe and the imminence of awful things. The immediate occasion was forgotten. Out of the minds of all of them, save only those of the man and maid who had been made one upon that happy morning, the remembrance of the marriage feast passed and dissolved.

They were going up the last part of their journey to meet the Teacher who was up there in the clouds by the tomb of Lluellyn Lys, waiting for them with a message from God.

Silently, and almost without effort, they wound up the huge, steep rock.

The bracken ceased, the heather was no more, and only the vast granite boulders, painted a thousand fantastic colours—ash-green, crimson, orange, and vivid grey—by the lichens which covered them, reminded them that they were still in a world where herbs grew and the kindly nature of the vales yet held a divided sway with the mysterious and untrodden places of the sky.

Now the light, which had become fainter and more faint as the first fleecy heralds of the great cloud-cap into which they were entering enveloped them, began to fail utterly. They walked and climbed upwards, upwards and for ever up, in a white world of ghostly

vapour, until at last, without a sound, and with profound expectation and reverence in every heart, they knew by the change in the contour of the ground that they were near upon the mountain-top, and close to the cairn of stones where their old leader, Lluellyn Lys, lay in his long sleep, and where their living guide and Master, Joseph, was awaiting them.

On the very top of the mountain itself the air was bitter chill, and the ghostly cloud-wreaths circled round them, while their quiet, questioning voices sounded muffled and forlorn.

They waited there, not knowing whether to advance or to call to the man whom they had come to seek. At the head of the little group Thomas and Mary stood hand in hand, looking at each other with questioning eyes and waiting.

Then, through the swaying whiteness they saw a grey shadow advancing towards them. It grew from a shadow into a blackness, from a blackness into the form of a tall man, and in a second more the Teacher had come to them.

None of them there ever forgot, none of all who were there ever will be able to forget, that sudden, silent, advent of the man who led them, and whom they loved.

He came upon them without noise, came upon them through the gloom. But as he came he seemed to bring with him a radiance which was not of this earth. Many of them said that round the noble head which so poignantly resembled and so wonderfully reminded them of the face of the Man of Sorrows, a yellow nimbus hung, a bright radiance which illuminated that grave countenance, and shone in the gloom like a star of hope.

He came up to Thomas and kissed him upon the

cheek, and, turning to the young man's wife, he kissed her also in holy greeting. Then, standing a little way back from them, his face alight with a supreme joy and happiness, he raised his hands and blessed them all.

"The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be among you and remain with you always."

The happy voice rang through the mist with an organ harmony. And it seemed as if it was answered and echoed in its lovely music by a faint burst of song and melody high up in the air and all around.

It was as though the angels of Heaven were rejoicing in the mating of a pure man and maiden.

Then Joseph spoke again.

"Come, beloved brother and sister, and my dear brethren," he said, "come to the tomb of Lluellyn Lys, whose body lies here until the glorious Resurrection Day, and whose soul is in Paradise, walking with the blest. Come and stand round that tomb, and pray for London, which you are sworn to conquer for the Lord. Come and pray for Thomas and Mary, that their lives may be a song of triumph over evil, and that they may lead you worthily until your lives' end."

With that he turned, and then all followed him until in a few steps the long pile of granite stones rose up above them, and they stood by the burial-place of the dead prophet of Wales. They stood round in silence, and then old David Owen stepped out from among them and put his gnarled old hand upon the Teacher's arm.

"Master," he said, in a voice which quivered with emotion too deep for tears—"Master, what words are these?"

Joseph looked upon him with a smile of love.

"Old friend," he answered—"old tried and trusted friend, old captain in the army of God, you have come here with all of us to listen to my last message."

There was a stir and movement among them all and through the dark each looked at each with apprehension and fear in their hearts.

A chill descended upon all of them, that chill which comes to one who loves when he fears that the loved one is departing or going upon a long journey.

Once more Mary's hand stole into her husband's and the cold hands that sought each other, and clasped were trembling.

They heard the Master's voice above them, for he had mounted to the top of the great cairn of piled stones, and stood spectral up there in the mist.

"This, beloved, is what I have to say to you," he began. "It is here and upon this spot, that the Spirit of the Lord came to me and led me to the work which we have carried out together. It was here that I and you knew that it was our special mission ordained of the Almighty and led by the Holy Spirit, to bring London to a knowledge of God, and to do what we could, under God's ordinance, to lead it towards the salvation of the Cross. And it is here that I say what will be my last words to you, for the hand of the Lord is upon me, and I think that I may not be with you more. One and all go back to the great, dark city and fight for its salvation until you fall in the battle, and are caught up to the joy which the Redeemer has promised you. One and all devote your lives, your energies, your strength, your every power of body, mind and spirit, to that great end. Remember always that to this special war you have been called and summoned, and that it is your lifework and your spiritual duty

until the end. With you here to-day are our dear brother and sister, Thomas and Mary. It is to them that I delegate my leadership. It is to them that the guidance of the Holy Spirit which has been so vouchsafed to me, will come. They will be your leaders in the great battle, and it is to them that you must look for help and succour in the material fight, as ambassadors and regents in the battle of the Most High.

"And now, farewell! I am going a long way, whither I know not. But it has come to me that this is the concluding moment of my ministry, and I bow my head humbly to the Divine Will, and pray that wherever I may be taken I may yet be permitted to labour for the Lord until the glorious Resurrection Day, when the supreme spirit of love will rule all things throughout all eternity.

"Love! That is the last word of one who loves you, and one who lives as you all do, in the supreme love of the God of Heaven. Feed the fatherless, comfort and succour the oppressed, give up all that you have of goods, of energy, of power, to the poor. There is no other word but Love. Farewell!"

The ringing voice ceased, and they stood as figures of stone, like the great Druid circle of old heathen tombs which still remains upon the mountain slope.

LOVE!

That was the last word they heard, and then the Master seemed to falter for a moment, seemed to sway and move. There was a sound of a wind coming nearer and nearer, as though it was rushing over the mountain-tops from the summit of distant Snowdon itself.

The sound of a great wind, and then a soft and sud-

den radiance showed them the Christ-like figure of their Friend with the arms again upraised in blessing with love shining from his eyes. The sound of the wind growing louder and louder and louder, a rushing, mighty wind, a wind which enveloped them with wild, tempestuous force, which blew the ghostly mists away—away and far away, until the sun shone upon the tall, long tomb of Lluellyn Lys, and there was no more any man there.

THE END

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